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IN THE SIXTIES AND SEVENTIES

IN THE SIXTIES AND SEVENTIES

Impressions of Literary People
and Others   

By LAURA HAIN FRISWELL



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PREFACE

IN writing this book, I have tried to picture certain scenes in the life of a young girl, the only daughter of two most unworldly idealists who tried to live the Gentle Life, or in other words, the Simple Life. The girl was, from her earliest years, thrown amongst an exceptional set of people, most of whom were then, or have since become, celebrated. I have done my best to draw pictures of these people, and to describe their relations to the girl, their kindness to her, and the impressions they made upon her. I have also essayed to depict the beginnings of certain movements that were to reform Society and what are called the "Lower Classes," but which, like so many such schemes, have fallen into disuse or abuse.

I will only add that I earnestly hope that the prediction of the late Mr. H. D. Traill will come true, and that *In the Sixties and Seventies* will please the public.

LAURA HAIN FRISWELL

WIMBLEDON, 1905.

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In the Sixties and Seventies

CHAPTER I

JAMES HAIN FRISWELL, ESSAYIST, CRITIC, AND NOVELIST; AUTHOR OF "THE GENTLE LIFE"—THE "INSTITOOSHUN"—MR. FRISWELL'S COURAGE—"LITTLE TODDLEKINS" AND HER FATHER.

"THERE was once a time," says Thackeray in *The Newcomes*, "when the sun used to shine more brightly than it appears to do in this latter half of the nineteenth century; when the zest of life was keener, when the perusal of novels was productive of immense delight, and the monthly advent of magazine day was hailed as an exciting holiday; when to know Thompson, who had written a magazine article, was an honour and a privilege."

We do not feel like this now; there are too many novels, too many magazines (all alike too), and too many Thompsons writing; the "privilege," it seems, would now be to know the person who does not write. But Thackeray was speaking of the days of his youth, and yet it seems to me this passage would equally apply to the time when he was writing it. I do not

quite know the year *The Newcomes* first appeared, but if it was published as he wrote it, which is most likely, it must have been in 1853 or 1854, for the last words were written in Paris in June, 1855.

At this time there lived in Pentonville, then a somewhat rural neighbourhood, a young couple who were enthusiastic admirers of Thackeray. The day that the instalments of his novels came out was "hailed as an exciting holiday"; and though the stories often ran twenty-three months, it was not a day too long for these enthusiastic young people. Should we keep up our interest in a story now for nearly two years? and could any one feel excited over magazine day?—but there is no magazine day, because there are more magazines than days in the longest month.

This young couple, who were known to their friends as "the model couple," had soaring ambitions, and a great idea of their duty to their fellow creatures. The young man, whose name was James Hain Friswell, and who afterwards became well known in literary circles, and to the world, as an essayist and novelist, being anxious for the advancement and education of the masses, taught in a ragged school two or three times a week, helping his schoolfellow, the Rev. Warwick Wroth. Mr Wroth was a remarkable man, an æsthetic of the old school, and the first clergyman of the Established Church to don vestments. Hard work and fasting undermined his health, and he died at an early age.

Mr. Friswell not only helped in the ragged school, but he joined an institution in Gray's Inn Road, where he laboured to drum into the heads of working-men mathematics and the rudiments of Latin and Greek. The institution was started by Mr. Passmore Edwards, whom every one now knows for his philanthropic schemes ; he was even then laying the foundation for those greater works, and the young author threw himself with enthusiasm into his scheme for helping the poor. He was an idealist ; he felt he was improving mankind, and making the world, in his little way, better than he found it. This thought was his reward ; and as he looked at the whitewashed walls of the "institooshun," as his pupils called it, he felt he was not living quite uselessly.

Those were the days when there was so much stir amongst the people ; 1848 was over, but the Charter and the Five Points were still debated. The masses were seething, struggling for more education, more freedom. In France Lacordaire preached the Gospel, and with it the benefit of the poor. The Abbé Lamennais had made a social tract of some of the words of the Saviour, and called it, I believe, "The Gospel of Freedom," and on the walls of the "institooshun" hung two remarkable portraits ; one was Eugène Sue, then well known for his socialist novels, the other was Charles Kingsley, M.A., author of *Alton Locke*.

Eugène Sue was a man of some forty-five years,

and unmistakably a Frenchman, although utterly different from the old Frenchman of the *haute noblesse*, and equally so from the modern production. Charles Kingsley was as thoroughly English as Eugène Sue was French. A high, noble forehead, large, earnest, deep-set eyes (which the lithograph had hollowed as if with thought and work), a firm, close-shut mouth and powerful jaw ; here was a poet as well as a parson, a fighter as well as a writer, a leader as well as a priest ; earnest, glowing, true-hearted eyes shone out from beneath the forehead, and seemed to speak openly to whomsoever listened : "Come, let us work together for the good of mankind."

At the time the portraits hung there the institution did not pay. The typical working-man, who wanted to learn Latin and mathematics, soon rose to be more than a working-man, and the loafer always remained a loafer, and always will. The young author, who gave his hard-earned leisure to teach them, soon found this out, and was obliged to acknowledge that the typical working-man, like all good and great men, is somewhat of a rare bird, and also that the young men of the day would rather play croquet with the girl of the period, or even dress in "drag," play at an amateur theatre, burn statues in a college quadrangle, or listen to the Christy Minstrels, than teach the typical working-man.

The neighbourhood round Clerkenwell and Bagnigge Wells Road was not very charming even in those days,

though it was more rural than now. Mr. Hain Friswell, in his philanthropic labours, used to frequent some very low courts and alleys, and his courage and coolness often stood him in good stead. One evening as he was going down Saffron Hill, a very low neighbourhood, a policeman called upon him to assist him in the capture of a man who was "wanted," and who had hidden himself in a house down a court, where the inhabitants were in a state of revolt against the law entering in person. The young author followed the policeman into the court. They were hooted and yelled at and pelted with cabbage stumps and brickbats. Hot water was thrown over them from the houses, but they stood their ground, and the young author addressed the people, and so worked upon their feelings that they not only left off insulting them, but the man came down and gave himself up.

There are parts of London now so squalid that it seems a wonder that they were ever any different, and yet not so many years ago they were inhabited by well-to-do merchants and gentry, who kept their carriages; this is the case in the neighbourhood of Holborn and Lincoln's Inn Fields. In Lincoln's Inn and some of the adjacent streets there are still fine old houses, dating back to the time of Charles II., and in one of these my maternal grandfather lived and carried on his business as an engraver. I can just remember the lofty rooms, high carved oak mantelshelves and deep window seats; the staircase

was very fine and wide, and all the rooms were panelled, no doubt in oak, but they had been painted various colours. The drawing-room was on the first floor, and a very large room, painted pale green ; leading out of that was my mother's and aunt's studio, its window covered up till there was only a top light ; the fireplace was across one of the corners of the room, and near it stood a large carved oak chair. I fancy I can see sitting in that chair a very tiny child, with a pale face and a quantity of pale yellow hair ; she is named Laura, after Laura Bell, in *Pendennis*, one of Thackeray's most charming heroines ; I scarcely think the novelist would have felt complimented, but, as I have said, the child's near relations were enthusiastic young people, and great readers and admirers of Thackeray and Dickens. The child is sucking her thumb and watching with great gravity her aunt paint some gleaming fish which are lying upon some rushes ; presently she falls asleep ; a bell rings, and she wakes with a start, to find herself alone in the room—that dreadful person the lay figure staring at her, and the plaster casts of heads, hands, and feet dancing in the firelight ; the Fiamingo Boys, which are hung from the ceiling, really seem to be alive, and the one she has for a dolly, wrapped up in an old piece of silk, lying in a chair at her side, positively stares at her, for her aunt has painted its face till it is most lifelike. She lifts up her voice and weeps, then the door flies open, and her father, the young

author and engraver, hurries in. She cannot remember what he is like, but she knows he has the brightest, merriest blue eyes and fair hair. "All alone!—poor little Toddlekins," he says, and he catches her up, Fiamingo Boy and all, and bears her off downstairs.

It is difficult to realise at this space of time that I and that child are the same ; but it is always so. We look back to our childhood, or youth, and the child or young girl seems to be some one else, some one we have seen and known ; and so I can remember Toddlekins. I know she sat at tea on a very prickly horse-hair chair ; I know she moved restlessly, and that the heavy doll, in spite of her frantic clutches at it, rolled down upon the floor, and off came its head. She wept long and loudly and was quite inconsolable, while her grandfather and grandmother scolded her aunt for having given her such a plaything as an expensive plaster cast.

It is dim remembrances, such as these, which seem like dreams, that made me, many years afterwards, when I read *The Old Curiosity Shop*, associate it with my grandfather's house. It was a beautiful old house, not a bit like the real Curiosity Shop, as I know now ; but then I had not seen the little, dirty, shabby old house which is said to be the original of Dickens's story. My grandfather was a collector of pictures, china, silver, and everything that was valuable, and the old and curious things that filled the house must have influenced me, for to this day I always think of it as "The Old Curiosity Shop."

But I see another picture of little Toddlekins in her own home, that small house in Pentonville. It is tea-time, and the fire and lamp-light shining on crimson walls and table-cover make a pleasant picture. There were no five o'clock tea-cloths in those days, and the wooden or Japanese tea-tray had not become fashionable, so the tray was of enamelled iron—it is chocolate and gold, and has a very flat and elaborate edge. The pattern consists of scrolls and leaves in gold—there is no crude landscape to set your teeth on edge, as I have seen on some trays of that period. A young and pretty woman, with her hair done in curls something like Thackeray's Amelia, sits in front of the tray, and close to her is her husband, who has said good-bye to his books for an hour or so, and is listening to his little son, whom he calls "the Philosopher Dick"; to quote my father: "Dick has made a wonderful machine out of three pieces of firewood, an old pill-box, a wheel from the bottom of a wooden horse, a cotton reel, and some twine. Dick is always making machines of a most useless and absurd character, but he is pleased and busy; he proposes to fill the pill-box with water, for some impossible project, which will end in soaking his pinafore; happy Dick! there are some machinists in the world whose projectures are quite as absurd."

And here is a description of Toddlekins: "I turn from Dick to Toddlekins, who has been, with a face as grave as that of the Lady Mayoress at a ministerial feast, receiving company for the last half-hour. She is

bright-eyed, with a fair face, and such a white and red skin as no lady in the land, not even Phyllis at eighteen, can boast ; like Fielding's Amelia she has the prettiest nose in the world, but, unlike that heroine, she has not yet broken it. She is receiving company ; the latter consists of a very wooden Dutch doll, a wax-faced ditto, Mr. Noah of the Ark, an elephant who has left his trunk behind him, a *papier maché* donkey, who in his youth used to wag what he has lost—his head—and a miserable kitten which has not spirit to run away. The company sit round Toddlekins and her tea-tray, and she now pours out a curious mixture of weak tea, milk, and dirt. The Dutch doll, an ugly brute with a face as flat as that of a clock, without a nose, and with no hair on its head, is the favourite. Why is it so?—I do not know. I hate it myself. It nearly threw me downstairs once. It's not half so handsome as the wax doll, nor on the whole so lively as Noah, nor so curious as the elephant ; yet she loves it, she bows down to it and worships it, and sets it in the place of honour, gives it the best things—it has the coffee-pot with the wooden spout to drink tea from—and favours it in a thousand odd ways, the stupid wooden thing ! Why does she do so ? But, ah me ! why do I and you, reader, bow down to our Dutch dolls ? We have some very wooden ones in the great world, and give them more valuable things than toy coffee-pots to play with.

“What does little Toddlekins do after ? A wiser

head than mine hath observed the ways of such people,
and tells us of a certain 'four years darling of a
pigmy size,' like Toddlekins, who goes through the
old, old games of life :

"A wedding, or a festival,
A mourning, or a funeral ;
And this hath now his heart,
And unto this he frames his speech :
Then will he fit his tongue
To dialogues of business, love, or strife,
But it will not be long
Ere this be thrown aside,
And with new joy and pride
The little actor cons another part.

CHAPTER II

TODDLEKINS AND GEORGE CRUIKSHANK—CRUIKSHANK'S GREAT PICTURE, "THE WORSHIP OF BACCHUS"—CRUIKSHANK AND TEMPERANCE—THE CHEVALIER AND MADAME DE CHATELAIN—ANDREW HALLIDAY AND TODDLEKINS—THE BROUGHS.

THE quotation in the last chapter is from *Other People's Windows*, a very well known book of my father's, published by Messrs. Sampson Low & Co. in 1868. I have abstracted this little piece of the sketch, as it gives a very lifelike, and, I think, pretty picture of the young author's home.

Again the scene shifts. It is summer-time, and I see little Toddlekins running to meet and throw her arms round an old gentleman, who picks her up and carries her into the house, while she hugs him and rubs her face against his. When they reach the drawing-room he sets her down, and she, rifling his pockets, pulls out a book—no less than *Cinderella*, beautifully illustrated by George Cruikshank. But Toddlekins is a very ignorant young lady—she can't read, and so, after placing the book upon a chair and her thumb in her mouth, she studies the pictures with the utmost interest and gravity.

Her father, mother, and Mr. Cruikshank talk for

a long time, and Toddlekins is as quiet as a mouse ; but when there is a lull in the conversation she looks round, and the artist smiles at her. That is enough ; she says nothing, but, pulling her thumb out of her mouth with a plop, she takes the book and climbs upon his knee, where she nestles against him, and he reads, or rather tells her, that wonderful story that no child ever grows tired of ; at least Toddlekins does not, for she sucks her thumb and looks alternately at the pictures and the narrator with her bright, dark blue eyes, and says, "Say it again, again" ; or she corrects him if he deviates one tittle from what he has told her on former occasions ; and George Cruikshank smilingly complies with her imperious demands, and interprets his beautiful illustrations and looks as happy and as pleased as the little child he is nursing.

Toddlekins was a privileged person, had she but known it, for in this way she had *Cinderella*, *Hop-o'-my-Thumb*, *Jack and the Beanstalk*, and many other fairy tales told her by that prince of illustrators. She was a glutton as far as fairy literature was concerned, and she was as charmed with George Cruikshank's illustrations as persons four times her age were. As to him, he loved his little listener, and would have her come and see his big picture. So Toddlekins went one fine Sunday morning with her father. She remembers that walk very well, and how smart she was in her bottle-green coat—they called

them pelisses then—and her drawn satin bonnet with its green rosettes. She remembers too how tightly her father held her hand, and how she seemed to trip up every now and then in the very paving stones, so that she swung off her feet right round in front of her father and clutched at his coat to save herself. This was such a very uncomfortable way of proceeding that her father told her to lift up her feet and to walk on her toes and her heels, and the Philosopher had to put it in practice to show her how; and so they at last came to George Cruikshank's house.

There Toddlekins was so amazed and rapt with what she saw that she was dumb. For many years that picture haunted her. She often dreamt about it, till at last she did not know if she had really seen it, or if it was only in a dream. But it was no dream, for in the National Gallery can be seen "The Worship of Bacchus," the picture that took George Cruikshank so much time and thought, and that so impressed Toddlekins that she stood in front of it and sucked her thumb; nor would she be beguiled from it by any offers of cake which Mrs. Cruikshank brought her.

She can see that large picture now; she can see Mrs. Cruikshank with a plate of cake, trying to allure her away from it; and she can hear the artist's jolly voice as he says:

"*There's* one of the British Public who appreciates it, at any rate."

Many times in after years she tried to describe that

picture, and ask her mother or father if there was such a one ; but children then were more in awe of their elders, and Toddlekens knew not how to describe it. A man crowned with grapes and sitting on a tub, was her most distinct memory ; but it was long after George Cruikshank had ceased to nurse her or to tell her stories, long after she had given up dolls, that she saw that picture again in the National Gallery, and heard the story of her visit to George Cruikshank's studio.

Mr. Cruikshank was at this time much interested in the Temperance movement, and a great advocate for putting down the liquor traffic. He was very anxious for my father to write a temperance drama, which I do not think my father quite saw his way to doing ; though he knew many actors, and could no doubt have got a play placed. Phelps and Marston were at this time at the height of their fame, but it is doubtful if either of them would have taken a temperance drama. Zola's *Drink* would have suited Cruikshank admirably, for there cannot be a stronger sermon preached in favour of teetotalism than *L'Assommoir* ; but Zola was in his cradle, or at least in the nursery, when Cruikshank was writing against drink, and trying to instil temperance into the minds of children by altering the ends of the old fairy tales. As most of us no doubt remember, these old stories are anything but temperance tracts. They end with the wedding of the hero and heroine, at whose marriage feast there is always a great deal of drinking. "Fountains of

wine ran in the streets," is a favourite sentence ; but Mr. Cruikshank considered this so "useless and unfit for children," that, as in the case of *Cinderella*, he rewrote the whole story, and, to quote his own words, "introduced a few temperance truths, with a fervent hope that some good may result therefrom."

Critics seem to have taken exception to these alterations, for Mr. Cruikshank addresses the public at the end of *Cinderella*, and advises his critics to make themselves better acquainted with the various versions of the old stories before they find fault with his.

I know now that my father did not agree with teetotalism, and no doubt he and George Cruikshank had many an argument on the subject ; some of these things may have reached childish ears ; this I cannot say, but I know Toddlekins began to think that bottles of wine thrown into the streets, casks of beer smashed so that the liquor ran down the gutters, was something that should not happen ; she considered that the King and Queen in *Cinderella* who gave orders that all the wine, beer, and spirits in the place should be collected together and piled upon the top of a rocky mound near the palace, and made a great bonfire of on the night of the wedding, "which was accordingly done, and a splendid blaze it made !" were wrong ; and one day, after due deliberation, no doubt, she broke through her golden rule of silence, and taking her thumb from her mouth, she looked up into the great illustrator's face and said solemnly :

“Naughty King—*waste nice wine.*”

Cruikshank looked at her in comic consternation ; her father laughed.

“You see how difficult it is,” he said ; “Toddlekins at any rate should be a disciple.”

“And she’s one of the unregenerate,” sighed Cruikshank, his eyes twinkling.

There is yet another picture I can recall of this time. It is a bright, sunny Sunday afternoon, and Toddlekins, in her green pelisse and drawn satin bonnet, with its rosettes of narrow baby ribbon to match, is again out with her father and the Philosopher. This time they are bending their steps to Warwick Terrace, Regent’s Park, to call upon the Chevalier and Madame de Chatelain.

The Chevalier de Chatelain, a Parisian by birth and a staunch Republican, came to England a very young man and started a French weekly paper, called *Le Petit Mercure*, afterwards changing the name to *Le Mercure de Londres*. He was an industrious writer and a great pedestrian ; in 1827 it is recorded he walked from Paris to Rome, to study the sayings and doings of Pope Leo XII. In 1830 he was at Bordeaux, editing *Le Propagateur à la Gironde*, an employment which led to his being condemned to six months’ imprisonment, and to having to pay a fine of 1,320 francs. He published many works in Paris, one being a translation into French of Chaucer’s *Canterbury Tales*, and he was invested with the

Prussian Order of Civil Merit. He returned to England in 1842 and was naturalised a few years afterwards ; he resided in London for nearly forty years, during which time he published fifty works. The best known are *Beautés de la Poésie Anglaise*, being translations of over one thousand pieces, from Chaucer to Tennyson ; and *Ronces et Chardons*, in which he denounces Napoleon under the title of "Chenapan III."

In London his wife was perhaps the better known in literary circles. She was the daughter of M. de Pontigny, a descendant of Count Pontigny. She was born in England, her mother being an Englishwoman. While residing in France in 1826, she published an elegy on the death of the famous painter David. This was her first literary effort, and it attracted so much notice that she then wrote in rapid succession, under various pseudonyms, stories, poems, and music, in both the French and English languages. Leopold Wray, Rosalie Santa Croce, Baronne Cornélie de B., etc., were some of her pen-names. She was connected with *The Queen*, *London Society*, *Reynolds' Miscellany*, *Chambers's Journal*, *Le Courier de l'Europe*, and in fact with most of the periodicals of that time. She married the Chevalier in 1842, and there could not have been a more united couple. They were devoted to each other ; so much so that Harrison Ainsworth persuaded them to try for the Dunmow flitch of bacon—an honour only conferred on a model

couple. It was awarded them, and Ainsworth had the pleasure of presenting it to Madame de Chatelain. On this occasion Madame is said to have stated that she and her husband had never had the least disagreement for twelve years. They knew many literary people, and were intimate friends of Victor Hugo and his family.

I have given this brief history of this remarkable couple because people's memories are so short now that they cannot look back more than twenty years, or scarcely that, and therefore to the majority, excepting for a few big names, the literary people of the last century might not have existed. And yet there were far more honest, if not cleverer, workers then, than the revelations of "literary ghosts" would lead us to believe is the case in these enlightened times.

But "little Toddlekins" knew nothing of these things; she was yet to awake to the tragedy, comedy, and pathos of life. She only saw the charming, sunny room, the handsome old man and his pretty, merry wife, and she made a curtsy to them as much like the one Cinderella was making to the prince in George Cruikshank's picture as she could. Madame de Chatelain was enchanted.

"Ah, c'est très jolie!" she cried. "The *petite*, the funny, funny mite!" and she snatched up Toddlekins and kissed her.

Now this was not at all what that dignified young

person expected ; she was not fond of being kissed. So when Madame sat down in a chair with her upon her knee, she shook her shoulders and frowned, at which Madame laughed. Toddlekens glanced reproachfully at her, and she would have struggled out of her lap, only she was absorbed in admiration of the Chevalier. She had never seen anything like him out of a picture. She can remember the grand figure he made in his long coat and curly brimmed hat, holding his gloves and gold-headed cane in one hand. He took off his hat and bowed gravely to Toddlekens, and she then noticed his beautiful white hair, upon which the sun shone. That picture never faded from her memory, but it was long afterwards, when Toddlekens was little no longer, and went to see some pictures with her mother, that she knew the Chevalier was like a Rembrandt. The little girl would have liked to suck her thumb and stare at the Chevalier for an hour ; but there were two reasons why she could not : first, she had gloves on ; and secondly, Madame was talking to her. So Toddlekens turned her attention to Madame, and, with the assistance of the Philosopher, she managed to let Madame know how old she was, and what her real name was ; then she launched into a rambling account of her favourite heroine Cinderella, which interested Madame greatly.

Now it was a subject that rather sickened the Philosopher ; he had heard it so often. So he politely turned his back upon them and devoted himself to

eating cake, which a servant had brought with the tea, and in wandering round the room examining everything. Toddlekens admired the Philosopher immensely, and often opened her eyes with wonder at the things he saw and knew—they were quite beyond her comprehension ; but then, as the Philosopher continually told her, “*she* was only a girl” ; and girls were not thought so much of in those days as they are now—not even by philosophers.

Cinderella being exhausted, Madame de Chatelain admired the little girl’s bonnet. Toddlekens agreed that it was “very, very pretty,” but she said confidentially, and pointing to the green rosettes upon it :

“These are not cabbages, though my grandfather says they are.”

“Cabbages?” said Madame, puzzled, as well she might be, for anything more unlike cabbages than those green rosettes it would be difficult to imagine. Toddlekens thought she did not understand, so she repeated very distinctly, “Cab-ba-ges!” and she nodded her head at each syllable, though she could not have spelt “cabbage” to save her life. Madame laughed and said :

“Ah! the funny mite!”

“They are *not* cabbages,” said Toddlekens in her shrillest voice.

Madame still laughed, and the Philosopher came to the rescue. Now he knew the Chevalier was a

foreigner, and he was not at all sure about Madame, for, if she wasn't French, she spoke that language mixed up with English, and when people do these things it is very difficult for very young philosophers to judge. So he took it for granted that Madame was a foreigner, and, as English people generally shout at those who cannot understand them, he went up to Madame and said in a loud voice :

“Cab-ba-ges ! Vegetables ! Things you have for dinner ! Greens, you know !”

Madame quite understood, but the scene was so funny she could only laugh. The Philosopher went on to explain very earnestly that his grandfather “did not *really* think the rosettes like cabbages, but only said so to tease Toddlekings.” The little girl listened with pride to the Philosopher's explanation ; no one could mistake what Dick said, she thought. But Madame appeared as puzzled as ever ; she still laughed. Toddlekings was distressed ; the Philosopher determined.

“Things you eat—*greens*, you know. Oh ! you must have them in your country,” he said, his eyes gleaming with intelligence and his face red with earnestness. “Oh, what *are* cabbages in French ?”

He looked up at the ceiling for inspiration, and Toddlekings looked up also ; Madame laughed and laughed, and the gentlemen, attracted by the loud talking, left off their conversation and asked what was the matter. Madame's pretty face was flushed and her bright eyes were dancing with mirth ; the

Philosopher was frowning at the ceiling, and Toddlekins was clasp- ing and unclasp- ing her hands, her eyes were very bright and her mouth was going down at the corners ; her father knew she was nervous and about to cry. Madame spoke rapidly in French, and ended with what Toddlekins took for *shoe*.

“ Not *shoes* ! ” she cried. “ Cab-ba-ges ! ”

At that every one but the Philosopher laughed, and Toddlekins was so disgusted she burst out crying.

“ Oh, *c'est pauvre*, the poor little thing, there, there,” cried Madame, grave at once ; and she hugged Toddlekins and kissed her, and wiped her eyes, and asked her who bought her those pretty new shoes. And then she wanted to know if the little girl had heard about “ Little Goody Two Shoes.” Toddlekins had not ; and as Madame had edited a book called *Merry Tales for Little Folk*, in which the story of “ Goody Two Shoes ” and many other veracious histories were written, she gave it to Toddlekins and the Philosopher.

The fairy-worshipper went out into the street with the book hugged close to her, a proud and happy child. It was rather thick and heavy for such a small person, but Toddlekins would not let the Philosopher have it ; not that he wanted it, for, as he explained to her as soon as they were outside the house, “ He knew all he wanted to know of those sort of things.” The Philosopher was annoyed because he had not remembered the French for cabbage ; and then he

had been laughed at, and even philosophers are not invulnerable to ridicule.

I have been told by many people that Toddlekins was a most charming little child, that "her laugh was so musical and infectious that it made every one smile." Now this is very pretty and pleasant to hear, but we all know what these charming children are said to grow up, so one can scarcely take it as a compliment ; and then one must remember all the clever people, young and old, who petted and amused her, and whose artistic natures no doubt idealised her. She had dolls by the score ; and had she collected them, instead of giving in to the Philosopher's persuasive powers, and allowing him to hang them for political offences from the balusters, whence they had a drop of twelve or fourteen feet, and lay smashed at her feet (when she would weep bitterly, or fly at him like a tigress for having "made them dead"), she could have had quite a museum of well-known names. The Cruikshank doll, the Phelps and Marston dolls, the Brough, the Andrew Halliday, and so on.

But I am sorry to record that she was not always amiable ; she was not strong, and she was very nervous and shy. George Cruikshank remained her favourite ; only one other well-known man was she at this time friendly with, and that was Andrew Halliday.

My mother tells a story of his first visit, and of how Toddlekins, instead of hiding in a corner, came and stood by his knee and looked in his face, and even

allowed him to nurse her. When he went her mother asked :

“Did you like that gentleman?”

“Yes,” replied Toddlekings.

“Why?” asked her mother.

“He had such pretty eyes,” said the unabashed child.

William and Robert Brough, the Greenwood brothers, the Vizetellys, and Charles Henry Bennett, who was then illustrating Charles Kingsley’s edition of *The Pilgrim’s Progress*, were frequent visitors.

The way these men lived and worked would be wondered, if not sneered at, in these luxurious days ; we have grown such mammon-worshippers, such snobs. But, though I can scarcely recall any of their faces, I love their names—they seem like old and dear friends : and I like to look into *The Welcome Guest*, *The Train*, *Diogenes*, and the other old magazines in which their writings or their illustrations used to appear. My father often spoke of them in later years, and always with admiration and affection.

My father, with his business training and domestic habits, was never a real Bohemian ; but he had many Bohemian friends, and had become initiated into the mysteries of “British Bohemia,” which, as Mr. Yates says, “is our equivalent for that *vie de Bohème* which in the middle of the last century, despite its poverty, its uncertainty, and in many cases its misery, had, in its wild and picturesque freedom from con-

ventionality, sufficient attraction to captivate a large section of the young men of Paris," the unfortunate Henri Mürger being its brilliant historian.

Bohemia scarcely exists now ; indeed, we are so fashionable that no one cares to hear anything about the middle classes ; almost all our novels deal with the doings of aristocrats (or rather the people the author considers such), and the denizens of the slums. In a popular novel I read lately, in which almost all the male characters are members of the Ministry, the author remarks that Fleet Street and its environment is almost an unknown quarter ! Evidently no one living so far West as Grosvenor Square is supposed to come farther East than Charing Cross. What a narrow sphere, and how much of interest they must miss !

Perhaps only a woman could have made such a remark about Fleet Street ; and I should say that she has not the true love of literature and literary people, nor can she be an Englishwoman, or she would not have thought it possible that any one could be ignorant of the very heart of London—indeed of England—where all the important work is done. The denizens of that smart club at Westminster could be scattered to-morrow, and no one would be much the worse ; but our citizens, our bankers, editors, lawyers, and all those people who toil all day in that far-off and unknown quarter that the butterflies of fashion scarcely know exists, we should indeed feel the loss of bitterly.

What, too, makes the remark more comic is that Grosvenor Square is evidently considered the centre of the world of fashion ; and yet now-a-days "that fickle jade, Fashion," is passing it by and forgetting it almost as completely as she has Russell Square and that once aristocratic quarter, Bloomsbury.

In the days of which I am writing the Strand and Fleet Street, beloved of Dr. Johnson, Goldsmith, Hazlitt, Charles Lamb, and others, were sacred places, as I believe they are now to all true lovers of literature. My father, I know, looked upon them as such and taught me to do the same. In our walks he would point out this or that tavern, frequented by Johnson or Goldsmith ; I was taken to see the latter's tomb in the Temple as if it were a sacred shrine, as it has always been to me since. Then there was the house where Charles Lamb lodged in Queen Street, Holborn ; the one in Brooke Street where Chatterton poisoned himself, and hundreds of other places that I have not space to mention. But all that part of London east of Charing Cross was an enchanted land to me, and is so still, in spite of its being so "improved" that it is almost unrecognisable. I liked old Temple Bar, and I detest the Griffin.

The Strand and Fleet Street were in the very heart of Bohemia, Bloomsbury was on its borders ; and I have always been sorry that, being an infant, and worse still, a girl infant, in the days of which I am writing, I could not know that happy band of young, gifted,

and enthusiastic workers. I have heard that they had a thorough contempt for the ordinary usages of society, and they carried this contempt into their dress and manners. The word "philistine" was much in vogue, and the class which it represented was of course an object of ridicule and contempt to the Bohemians. My father, though he was never "to the manner born," and objected to their irresponsible, careless ways, yet mixed freely amongst them, and made some life-long friendships.

Thackeray, in his last novel, quaintly describes Bohemia as "a pleasant land, not fenced with drab stucco like Belgravia, or Tyburnia : not guarded by a large standing army of footmen : not echoing with noble chariots, not replete with polite chintz drawing-rooms and neat tea-tables ; a land over which hangs an endless fog, occasioned by much tobacco : a land of chambers, billiard-rooms, and oyster suppers : a land of song : a land where soda-water flows freely in the morning, a land of tin dish-covers from taverns, and foaming porter : a land of lotos eating (with lots of cayenne pepper), of pulls on the river, of delicious reading of novels, magazines, and saunterings in many studios : a land where all men call each other by their Christian names, where most are poor, where almost all are young, and where, if a few oldsters enter, it is because they have preserved, more tenderly and carefully than others, their youthful spirits, and the delightful capacity to be idle. I have lost my way to

Bohemia," he adds with tender regret, "but it is certain that Prague is the most picturesque city in the world."

The Broughs and the Romers were perhaps the greatest Bohemians we knew. My mother tells a funny story of Robert Brough coming in about twelve o'clock one night, and sitting and talking till three in the morning, when she made him up a bed. The next morning he borrowed a clean collar, and invited my father and mother to dinner the following week ; but before the day came round he wrote to say "they hadn't even a tablecloth, and under the circumstances would they put off their visit ?" The collar was never returned, nor a fresh invitation given.

I have heard my father say that, in spite of his Bohemianism, "every one loved Robert Brough" ; he was brilliantly clever, but wholly careless of his personal appearance, and quite different from his brothers William and John Cargill Brough. William was neat in his appearance, and methodical in manner, but not nearly so clever as "Bob." The brothers Brough, as they were called, were the sons of a commercial man, and had had a good plain English education, on which they raised a fair superstructure of learning. Robert was a Radical, but being of a gentle nature, and in every true sense a gentleman, he did not emulate the literary achievements of some of the rank Republicans, as shown in the Sunday papers of that time ; but that he had a fierce hatred of the

governing classes there is no doubt, for he brought out a little book, called *Songs of the Governing Classes*. It was published by Vizetelly, and the following is a specimen of its polished workmanship, its vigour of thought and speech :

My Lord Tomnoddy's the son of an Earl,
His hair is straight, but his whiskers curl;
His Lordship's forehead is far from wide,
But there's plenty of room for the brains inside.
He writes his name with indifferent ease,
He's rather uncertain about the "d's"—
But what does it matter if three or one,
To the Earl of Fitzdotterel's eldest son?

My Lord Tomnoddy to college went,
Much time he lost, much money he spent;
Rules, and windows, and heads he broke—
Authorities winked—young men will joke!
He never peep'd inside of a book—
In two years' time a degree he took;
And the newspapers vaunted the honours won
By the Earl of Fitzdotterel's eldest son.

* * * * *

My Lord Tomnoddy prefers the Guards,
(The House is a bore) so!—it's on the cards!
My Lord's a Lieutenant at twenty-three,
A Captain at twenty-six is he—
He never drew sword, except on drill;
The tricks of parade he has learnt but ill—
A full-blown Colonel at thirty-one
Is the Earl of Fitzdotterel's eldest son!

* * * * *

The statements in this poem will not bear analysis, and are to a certain extent uncalled for; but that Robert Brough felt them there is no doubt; his poverty and ill-health, and the knowledge that he had the power to produce better work than any he

had yet published, if he had had the means to take life more easily, no doubt caused his bitterness against rank and wealth, as it does in so many brilliant men who are hampered by the necessity to live.

A copy of his little book, *Songs of the Governing Classes*, he presented to my mother, and signed his name—Robert B. Brough—saying as he wrote it, “I suppose you do not know what the B. stands for?”

My mother said she did not.

“Barnabas,” replied Brough ; “but don’t tell anybody—I shall deny it if you do.”

CHAPTER III

SUPPER-ROOMS—ROSS THE SINGER—"EVANS'S"—A PATHETIC STORY—
MY VISIT TO "EVANS'S"—WE SEE THE PRINCE OF WALES—PADDY
GREEN.

IN those days the most popular resorts for young men who liked to keep late hours were certain supper-rooms and singing taverns. The most noted were situated in the neighbourhood of the Strand. My father was not a frequenter of any of these places, preferring to spend his evenings at home writing, or, as I have said in the first chapter, in teaching working-men in an institution started by Mr. Passmore Edwards in the Gray's Inn Road ; but he sometimes visited "The Coal Hole," "The Cider Cellars," and "Evans's" in company with Albert Smith of "Mont Blanc" fame,* who was then living in Percy Street, or of Godfrey Turner, a clever journalist who afterwards became leader-writer on *The Daily Telegraph*.

Thackeray seems to have been fond of immortalising

* Albert Smith had ascended Mont Blanc, in those days a rare feat ; he gave an account of this ascent in a monologue, accompanied by songs and characters, and splendidly illustrated views by William Beverley. The entertainment was given at the Egyptian Hall, and was popular for many years.

these places, for "The Back Kitchen" spoken of in *Pendennis* is said to be "The Cider Cellars," which was in Maiden Lane, almost opposite Rule's, the celebrated oyster shop, and next door to the stage door of the Adelphi Theatre. Albert Smith, in his *Adventures of Mr. Ledbury*, speaks of "The Cider Cellars" by name, while Thackeray gives the following description of the jolly singing suppers at "The Back Kitchen":

"Healthy country tradesmen, and farmers in London for their business, came and recreated themselves . . . squads of young apprentices and assistants, the shutters being closed over the scene of their labours, came hither, for fresh air doubtless;—rakish young medical students, gallant, dashing, what is called 'loudly' dressed, and (must it be owned?) somewhat dirty, were here smoking and drinking and vociferously applauding the songs;—young University bucks were to be found here too, with that indescribable genteel simper which is only learned at the knees of Alma Mater; and handsome young guardsmen, and florid bucks from the St. James's Street Clubs;—nay, senators English and Irish—and even members of the House of Peers."

All these different people came to hear a singer whom Thackeray calls Mr. Hodgen, whose song, called by the novelist "The Body Snatcher," was such an immense success that the whole town rushed to listen to it. "A curtain drew aside, and Mr. Hodgen

appeared in the character of the Snatcher, sitting on a coffin, with a flask of gin before him, with a spade, and a candle stuck in a skull. The singer's voice went down so low that it rumbled into the hearer's awe-stricken soul, and in the chorus he clamped with his spade, and gave a demoniac Ha ! Ha ! which caused the very glasses on the tables to quiver as with terror."

Now this singer's real name was Ross ; he had a very fine bass voice, and the song which had such an enormous success was called " Sam Hall " ; it was about a man who had committed a murder, and who was sentenced to be hanged. Mr. Ross, I have heard my father say, made up with a ghastly face, and sitting across a chair, acted in a most realistic manner ; there was a horrible refrain to the song, and the whole effect produced was most tragic. There was no standing room in " The Cider Cellars " while " Sam Hall " was being sung.

The singer lived next door to my father. He was a good-looking, jovial man, fond of his wife and children, but of a somewhat too convivial turn of mind ; my father and mother, and indeed the whole quiet street, were not unseldom awakened at two o'clock in the morning by a hansom dashing up, and Mr. Ross's fine voice trolling out, not " Sam Hall," but some popular and sentimental ditty. Looking back I fancy I can see, walking in a pretty garden, accompanied by two rosy-cheeked little girls, a tall, dark-whiskered, red-faced man, whose stentorian voice

used to make Toddlekins stare as he greeted her nurse with, "Well, how are you, my own Mary Ann?" * Mary Ann being the young woman's real name, his jokes were not appreciated.

Evans's Supper-Rooms, commonly called "Evans's," was of all these places the most popular and the most likely to be remembered. It was situated at the western corner of the Covent Garden piazza, underground, an hotel being above. It had been started by a man named Evans, but he had died, and when I remember it it was run by a little, old, round-about man called Paddy Green, who was a very worthy fellow, and quite a character in his way. It was a favourite resort of Thackeray, Douglas Jerrold, Serjeant Ballantyne, Hannay, and most of the well-known men of that day. Paddy Green used to go round and talk to all and sundry, his courteous manner and good temper charming every one. Then there was a curious old German there, named Herr von Joel, who used to sing songs with a joddling refrain, and play on a curious instrument which he called a "vokking shteeck." Thackeray speaks of his wonderful whistling and of his imitations of the songs of birds. My father had not heard him in his prime, but he was one of the few who knew that the old man, who wandered about the room selling cigars, had been a celebrity in his day. One day, in passing through Covent Garden, he saw him sitting under the piazza,

* "My own Mary Ann"—a popular song at that time.

on a wooden chair in the sun. He looked very feeble, almost corpselike, but when my father crossed and spoke to him he found him in a terrible state of excitement. Sure of a sympathetic listener he commenced :

“Ach ! those two terrible peoples, that dreadful voman. Vat you think they do ? Ach ! it is *awful*. I fall asleep ; I sleep so sound for a long, long time. I vake—something against my leg vake me—it vas icy cold. I ope mine eyes, and dere vas dat man in black—vat you call him ?—de—de—undertaker—he vos measuring me for mine coffin ! Ach ! ach ! I vill go home no more ! I get up at vonce, I dress, I take a chair—I vill go home no more ! Ach ! it vas too terrible !”

My father tried to calm him, but the poor man was fully persuaded his relatives were tired of him and anxious for his death.

“The Cave of Harmony” in *The Newcomes* is certainly Evans’s. It was to the “Cave” that the bucks of that day, after going to the pit of the theatre, as was the fashion, adjourned to sup off welsh rabbit, and listen to three admirable glee singers and other artists. “The Chough and Crow,” “The Red Cross Knight,” and “The Bloom is on the Rye” were favourite songs ; and Thackeray tells us that there came into the “Cave” one night “a gentleman with a lean brown face, long black moustaches, and dressed in loose clothes, and evidently a stranger to the place.”

This gentleman was Colonel Newcome, and he was pointing out the changes to his son, young Clive, and telling him that all the wits used to come there—Mr. Sheridan, Captain Morris, Colonel Hanger, Professor Porson. Clive Newcome, recognising a schoolfellow, goes over to speak to him, followed by his father ; the young man then introduces three college friends.

“You have come here, gentleman, to see the wits,” says the Colonel. “Are there any celebrated persons in the room ? I have been five-and-thirty years from home, and want to see all there is to be seen.”

One of the company thinks it would be a joke to take the Colonel in, by pointing out certain nobodies as Rogers, Hook, Lutterell, etc. ; but the others won't have it, and they give the proprietor, whom Thackeray calls Hoskins, a hint that the songs had better be selected, as there is a boy and a gentleman, “quite a greenhorn,” in the room.

“And so they were,” says Thackeray. “A lady's school might have come in, and, but for the smell of cigars and brandy and water, have taken no harm by what happened. Why should it not always be so ? If there are any ‘Caves of Harmony’ now I warrant Messrs. the Landlords their interest would be better consulted by keeping their singers within bounds. The very greatest scamps like pretty songs, and are melted by them ; so are honest people. It was worth a guinea to see the simple Colonel and his delight at the music. . . . He joined in all the

choruses with an exceedingly sweet voice. He laughed at 'The Derby Ram' so that it did you good to hear him ; and when Hoskins sang (as he did admirably) 'The Old English Gentleman,' tears trickled down the honest warrior's cheeks, while he held out his hand to Hoskins and said, 'Thank you, sir, for that song ; it is an honour to human nature.' "

The Colonel is charmed with each feat of young Nadab, the Improvisatore, who has pat rhymes to suit all the people in the room. All goes on well, even the Colonel himself singing "Wapping Old Stairs," till Captain Costigan, coming in very drunk, offers to sing, and selects one of the most outrageous performances of his repertoire. At the end of the second verse the Colonel started up, clapping on his hat, seizing his stick, and looking as ferocious as though he were going to do battle with a Pindaree. "Silence !" he roared out—he then gives the company a piece of his mind, and walks out followed by his son.

At the end of the sixties the popularity of "Evans's" was still at its height, but it was different from what it was when Clive Newcome saw it. Some time before the little room had been found too small for the mighty audiences, so it was pulled down, and a large concert room and an annex had been built on the site. Partly along one side of the room ran a gallery, which was fitted up as an ante-room and a private supper-room. The ante-room led into the supper-room, from which it was divided by a green velvet curtain. From this

gallery ladies could look down through a grille into the hall, and could see and hear without being seen.

In the body of the hall were numbers of small round marble-topped tables, and round these men sat, eating a substantial supper of steak, chops, etc., or merely enjoying a cigar or pipe and a glass of beer or wine. At the end of the hall was a stage for the singers. The entertainment was as much improved as the room; the music-hall songs had given place to old glees and madrigals, the choruses of which were sung by trained lads (some of them being the choir-boys of St. Paul's), whose fresh young voices sounded very sweet in those old songs.

My father was enchanted with the singing of these boys, and said that my mother and I must hear them. He therefore arranged with Paddy Green that we should come one night to the private supper-room in the gallery, not to take supper, "but to have a little light refreshment and a glass of champagne." Paddy Green professed himself greatly gratified and delighted, and he said, "We must have a special entertainment for your daughter—nothing *outré*, nothing vulgar." Though he had never seen me, he had a list of the various entertainments copied out, and sent it to me with a kindly message that I was to choose all the music, vocal and instrumental, for that night. I chose a selection from *Macbeth* as instrumental music, and several glees by various composers: I know "Sweet

and Low " was one, "Hush thee, my Babe," another, and I also chose the celebrated Thuringian air "Breathe not of Parting," which was most beautifully sung. I requested that the gentleman who played airs on a coffee-pot should play old English airs, and not anything Scotch. My father laughed, and said I gave my commands like a queen. The visit was all duly arranged a week or more in advance, and I was brim full of excitement, especially as a friend, a girl a few years my senior, was to accompany us.

The evening arrived, and we drove up to the supper-rooms about ten o'clock, intending to stay till after twelve, for I had arranged a moderately long programme. We were shown up into the gallery, and entered the ante-room, or first box (the rooms were something like large boxes at a theatre); my mother seated herself in the chair farthest from the stage, my father opposite her, and my friend in the middle, while I elected to roam about from one room to the other. So I lifted the velvet curtain and, dropping it behind me, passed into the large room. There I found a table elegantly laid for four people. There were just four of *us*, and at the first glance I thought we were going to sup there; but we had dined at eight and could not possibly want supper—besides, my father had said "only light refreshment." I wandered round the table and looked at the beautiful damask and the rare flowers. I sat down near the grille and listened to the boys' beautiful voices, and I thought I might

be in fairy-land. Aladdin, who, rubbing the lamp, ordered a feast, might have had just such a table set before him, I told myself. Then I thought of the Prince in the story of *The White Cat* who is led into a dining-room by some hands to which no body is attached, and finds a table elegantly laid for two; but this was for four—who would be coming, I wondered? I made up my mind it must be a prince.

The artist had just played the old English airs on the coffee-pot, amid a storm of applause, when my father, lifting the velvet curtain, called me, and I was introduced to Paddy Green, who was very deferential and charming, complimenting me on my excellent programme, and telling me I had good taste in music. Then he and my father had a low-toned colloquy, in which I heard Paddy Green say, with much shrugging of the shoulders, that “he was very sorry” —“most unfortunate, but what could he do?”—and my father that “it was of no consequence, we should not have stayed late, and that now, of course, we should go at once.”

“No, no,” said the genial little man, “they will not be here till after the theatres, and your daughter will like to see the celebrities—but no notice must be taken.”

“Certainly not,” said my father emphatically, and at this point, the champagne and sandwiches arriving, we turned our attention to eating and drinking, while the beautiful voices of the boys sang “Hush thee, my

Babe," and Paddy Green, with "nods and becks and wreathed smiles," silently drank our health and then stole quietly away.

When the glee was over my father told us that Royalty was coming to supper in the next room, and that, as there was no other entrance, they would pass through our room, and therefore he meant to leave at half-past eleven. Paddy Green did not think the party would arrive before that time. Now the song my father particularly wanted us to hear was "Breathe not of Parting," and it was in the middle of the programme, so we waited for it. I shall never forget how beautifully it was sung, and what a storm of applause greeted it; there was an encore, and again the boys' beautiful voices seemed almost to whisper the words, and the silence was so intense a pin could have been heard to drop; the song seemed to die away, and I came back to earth with a sigh. I found I was in the royal supper-room, and I made haste to go, for, though my programme was only half through, we were going; I therefore stepped quickly to the velvet curtain and drew it aside, to find myself face to face with the Prince of Wales.

I do not know how I looked, but he looked very well and jolly, and intensely amused as he held back the curtain for me and gave me a pleasant smile and bow as I bowed and thanked him; there were two ladies behind him and a gentleman. My mother and my friend were seated, apparently absorbed in the stage.

my father was standing, and directly the curtain fell behind them we put on our cloaks and passed out.

We were all very loyal people, but I think that night we were none of us as pleased as we ought to have been to see the heir to the throne.

Paddy Green said, " You must come again, Missie, you must come again " ; but that was my first and last visit to " Evans's."

CHAPTER IV

UNDER A CLOUD"—THE BURTONS—TO SCHOOL AT WATFORD—YELLOW-BACKED NOVELS—THE SPECIMEN PUPIL.—MR. AND MRS. GERALD MASSEY—THOMAS COOPER, CHARTIST.

IN those happy days writing had not become a trade, and people were not always in a hurry. Education was not perpetually being talked about ; children were not "crammed " to pass examinations, as geese are for market ; there were no school boards—and it was possible to get a respectable servant, who had some idea of doing her duty, and of being respectful to her employers. But many of the working classes could neither read nor write, and this was the case with "my own Mary Ann," as Mr. Ross called my nurse.

My mother was anxious to remedy the defect, and when my father was out, or busy in his study, she gave the young woman lessons, and after the lessons read aloud some story, while Mary Ann nursed the new baby, and the Philosopher and Toddlekins sat as quiet as mice, but much interested in the proceedings. It was thus that Toddlekins heard her first novel, and became very fond of the story ; and here she showed her good taste, for the novel was *Under a Cloud*, by

one of the Greenwood brothers; it appeared in a weekly magazine called *The Welcome Guest*; and though Toddlekens was much too young to understand it, she would run about with a bound volume of the magazine, a big book that she could scarcely carry, and ask for "Wappits, you're wanted," as she called the story, after her favourite illustration.

But "little Toddlekens" vanishes, like the fairy her old friend George Cruikshank declared she was; a thin, pale child takes her place. The baby has grown into a sturdy boy, he and the pale child trudge to school together to Hart Street, Bloomsbury. My father had moved to Southampton Street, Bloomsbury; he had been looking for a house in that neighbourhood for some time, but could not get one to his liking. No. 3 was very large, having fifteen rooms; the ground floor, too, was a lawyer's offices, and let to a solicitor named Romew, which soon became "Romeo," and gave rise to endless jokes amongst the actors and authors who visited us.

It was in Southampton Street that the Burtons first came to see us. I can see Mrs. Burton now, a stylishly dressed woman—my childish ideal of a princess—talking, talking, talking to a beautiful, but silent companion, while a small girl, nursing a large wax doll, stares with solemn dark eyes at the picture they make.

I was so delicate in those days that I was almost always at home from school, and my mother scarcely let me out of her sight. It seemed to me that this

beautiful woman came and talked for whole days at a time, and it was all about "Dear Richard and the Government." Mrs. (afterwards Lady) Burton was of medium height, dark haired, bright complexioned, and very animated in her manner. My mother was a good listener; she was repose personified; only now and then she smiled or put in a word; but Mrs. Burton's stream of eloquence never seemed to be exhausted. I was intensely interested, at times worked up into an excited state. Once I crept out of my corner, and, with my doll clasped in my arms, came and stood in front of the lady and stared in her face. Mrs. Burton never saw me, but my mother told me to leave the room, and I silently obeyed, and toiled up the stairs to my grandmother's bedroom, where I myself slept; and sitting on my own little bed, I sat the doll up in front of me (she was a beautiful wax creature with long, curly hair, and wax arms and legs) and went over most of the argument about Richard and the Government, imitating Mrs. Burton's animated manner; but Richard was a fairy prince and Government an ogre.

Captain Burton was, I believe, in Africa when his wife came to ask my father to take up the cudgels in his defence, and to pour all her troubles into my mother's ears. Of all that was said, I can only remember one remarkable sentence, and that I afterwards found in one of Mrs. Burton's letters to my

father ; so, as we all do on occasions, she repeated herself. I can hear her now saying :

“ Yes, they are making a complete Aunt Sally of the poor fellow, and he can’t stand up for himself. You and Mr. Friswell will say he deserves it for his polygamous opinions ; but he married only *one* wife, and he is a *domestic* man at home, and a *homesick* man away. Poor dear Richard ! ”

She waved her hand energetically, and her eyes flashed ; I was very sympathetic, and felt as if I could kill Government ; my hands clenched, my cheeks burned, and my eyes were glowing ; it was then that my mother saw me and told me to run away.

I was naturally very anxious to see “ Richard,” as I always called Captain Burton to myself ; in fact, I do not think I realised that he was a mere man, and the husband of Mrs. Burton—he was some one infinitely greater.

When I did see him I was terribly disappointed and rather alarmed. He was not a fairy prince, but a bold bandit ; such a great, strong man could not want any one’s help, I thought, in my ignorance. His loud voice, and rather sneering manner, as though he believed in nothing in heaven or earth, and above all the long sabre cut across his face, made him look so fierce that he might well strike terror into the heart of a small girl. My mother says he was fond of talking about spiritualism, and of saying he believed in some of the wonderful stories he told on that

subject ; but he said so in such a cynical manner she never believed him ; he was also fond of telling the most vivid, wonderful, and often horrible stories, which she put down as travellers' tales. Of the Indian snake charmers, and conjurors, he had endless tales, one being that "he had seen them call down fire from heaven." He laughed at all religions, and to such an extent that my mother would never allow any discussion on the subject when he came. We were all charmed with Lady Burton.

Two or three doctors coming to the conclusion (and unanimously) that I could not live in London, I was sent to school at Watford. My school-mistresses were three maiden ladies, family connections of ours, and sisters to George Dawson, the popular Nonconformist minister and lecturer. The school was a pretty, old-fashioned, rose-covered cottage, surrounded by a large garden, and standing just outside the gates of Cassiobury Park. Here the Misses Dawson taught the young idea how to shoot—but it was in a very prim and old-fashioned manner.

On my going back to school after the first term a rather amusing incident occurred, which, as it throws some light on the curious old-fashioned prejudices of the time, I make no excuse for telling. My mother had seen me off at Euston, putting me in charge of the guard ; besides my beloved doll, I had a copy of *Diamonds and Spades*, which my mother had bought me at the station bookstall. *Diamonds and*

Spades is a dramatic story, written by my father; it had run through several editions, and was in the cheap two-shilling yellow cover which is even now the favourite colour for railway editions.

I was very miserable as the train started, for I hated leaving home, and there was nothing in common between me and the schoolgirls. I had not been used to girls, and I knew they looked upon me as odd :—“ curious little kid—talks like a book when she likes—but doesn’t she use odd words ! ” were some of the remarks they made.

At the beginning and end of a term the work is disorganised in most schools, and when I arrived in the schoolroom that afternoon, after taking off my outdoor things, I found the girls standing about in groups, discussing all they had seen or done in the holidays, or putting the new pupils through a regular catechism, which always took this form : “ Have you got a father ? ” and if the answer was Yes, “ What is he ? ”—if No, “ When did he die ? ” Then the questions went on till they had learnt all about the members of the family, and their respective ages and occupations. I had been through this ordeal the term before, but I pitied the scared, tearful child who, surrounded by half a dozen big girls, was undergoing it as I came in.

My appearance, with my doll on one arm and the book under the other, created a diversion ; they let the new pupil go, and closed round me ; one big

girl, snatching the book from me, waved it aloft, crying out :

“Look, look what the little kid has brought—one of those wicked yellow-backed novels.”

“Oh!—let’s look! Do let’s look!” cried several voices, while hands were out-stretched, and I began to think my book would be torn to pieces, and accordingly lifted up my voice in angry protest ; but many of those girls were eighteen, and none under sixteen, so they paid not the slightest attention to my wishes, but closed up round the girl who held *Diamonds and Spades*.

“O-o-oh!—doesn’t it look interesting? doesn’t it look wicked? Yellow books are always improper,” were some of the sentences I heard.

“Just look at the cover, a man murdering another.”—“Oh! *do* let me see—how is he doing it?”—“Why, hitting him over the head—can’t you see the poker, stupid?”—“It *does* look exciting—but won’t she get in a row!”

All this time I was crying out :

“Give me my book!—it isn’t wicked! Miss Dawson won’t take it away! Give me my book!”

“Where did you get it?” asked the girl who had taken it from under my arm ; she was a sister of one of the governesses, and a pupil teacher, and she tyrannised over the small girls mercilessly.

“My mother bought it for me,” I said, almost in tears.

“Oh, I daresay ! that won’t do—mothers won’t allow such books to be read, I know ; yellow-backs are always wicked.”

“Yellow books are *not* wicked !” I cried angrily, “and my father wrote it !”

At this point the governess, Miss H., appeared, and was appealed to. She looked very grave, and said she did not think that books bought from a railway book-stall were fit reading for any one, and especially not for little girls ; she could scarcely believe my mother bought it for me, but if so, she was sure Miss Dawson would wish to keep the book for me till I went home.

It was not often I showed temper, but I was so angry I turned upon Miss H. like a fury, and said :

“It’s *not* a wicked book ! my father wrote it ; books are not bad, and you are a set of ignorant Philistines.”

For a moment there was silence, and then a big girl asked :

“What are Philistines ?”

“You are so stupid, you don’t know half your own language ! Philistines are silly, dull people, who have no idea of literature or art !” I retorted.

“Who says that ?—the writing people you know, I suppose ?” asked a voice.

“Yes !” I cried, “the best, the cleverest, and most interesting people in the world !—every one else is dull and stupid !” and then I burst into such a storm of

tears that every one was silent ; then, out of the silence, the voice of a solemn, phlegmatic Russian girl said :

“My father says writers are a silly, wicked lot who make no money.”

At this point Miss Dawson entered. She was tall, spare, and very severe-looking, but one of the kindest women in the world. She wanted to know what was the matter, and she ordered my book to be given to me, saying that she was astonished at Miss H. taking it away when she saw who was the author.

The book was restored to me, but I was in such a state of nervous irritation that I cried myself ill, nor would I be pacified. I was quite laid up for some days, and Miss Dawson was very much annoyed ; but I doubt if she fully understood the matter, and I could not explain, as I was quite incapable of understanding the point of view of those big girls. Indeed, their behaviour bewildered me very much, for they all wanted to read *Diamonds and Spades*, and begged me to lend it to them, not because my father had written it, but simply because of the yellow cover.

“You called it wicked,” I said ; “then why do you want to read it ?”

They giggled and nudged each other and called me “Baby !”

I explained that this was a new and cheap edition, that the colour of the cover had nothing to do with a book. They would not agree : “Yellow-backs are always wicked,” they said. I further explained

that authors were obliged to put wicked people into stories, but that though it was wrong to rob or kill people, it was not wrong to read about such things.

Again they laughed, and I declared they should not have *Diamonds and Spades* till they explained their idea of a wicked book.

Miss L. H., the girl who had first taken the book from me, was the most determined to read it, and she gave me this explanation :

“It’s nothing to do with murders—I can’t explain, but I love reading yellow-backs, and I always do whenever I can. I should catch it like anything if my mother knew, but she doesn’t, for this is the way I manage. I get them from a library and smuggle them up into my room—it’s lovely there on a summer afternoon, the sun streams in the windows, and I sit up there with my work and a yellow-back ; I have the book in my lap, and my work—it’s generally plain sewing—in my hand, and if I hear my mother coming upstairs—and I listen, I can tell you—I hide the novel—sit on it, or drop my work over it, or slip it on the floor under my dress. Twice she’s nearly caught me—it was so interesting I did not hear her coming ; some day I shall be caught, and then won’t there be a fine to-do !” She laughed.

I thought L. H.’s mother must be curious, if not quite mad, to think novels so wicked, and I improved the occasion by lecturing L. H., in spite of her eight years’ seniority, on the enormity of deceiving her

mother. She laughed aloud, and said I was "as good as a play"; but she only wished her parents were like mine, and I was lucky to be allowed to go to the theatre and read what books I liked.

Years afterwards, when I read Sheridan's play, *The Rivals*, I was reminded of L. H. and her confessions. Who does not remember the scene in Mrs. Malaprop's lodgings, where Lydia Languish is discovered on a sofa with a book in her hand, and Lucy, her maid, enters in a hurry to say Sir Anthony Absolute and Mrs. Malaprop are coming upstairs?—

"*Lydia*: Here, my dear Lucy, hide these books. Quick, quick, fling *Peregrine Pickle* under the toilet—throw *Roderick Random* into the closet—put *The Innocent Adultery* into *The Whole Duty of Man*—thrust *Lord Aimworth* under the sofa—cram *Ovid* behind the bolster—there—put *The Man of Feeling* into your pocket—so, so—now lay *Mrs. Chapone* in sight, and leave Fordyce's *Sermons* open on the table.

"*Lucy*: O burn it, ma'am! the hairdresser has torn away as far as Proper Pride.

"*Lydia*: Never mind—open at Sobriety. Fling me Lord Chesterfield's *Letters*. Now for 'em."

The Misses Dawson were Baptists, and used to attend a small, whitewashed chapel of the barest description; a three-decker pulpit, with an enormous crimson velvet cushion on each reading-desk, having tassels about nine inches round and a foot long, gave tone and colour to the place. The preacher often

and vigorously thumped the cushion in the upper pulpit, while one of the tradespeople, a chemist, acting as clerk, stood in the lower and called out "Amen" in a stentorian voice; he also read out the hymns with much unction, then, waving his arms like a bâton, led the singing, thundering out the verse in so loud a tone that his voice was heard above all others. Having read and sung one verse, he read the next and then sang it, the congregation joining in, and so reading and singing, went through to the end. During the last verse of the hymn before the sermon he usually came out of his box and walked down the aisle, to speak to the door-keeper presumably; he sang his loudest all the time, and as he passed the noise was deafening, and the girls nearest the pew doors always ducked their heads and declared it was necessary to put up umbrellas.

The Gentle Life had been out some time, and was very popular. The Misses Dawson were, I suppose, proud of having the author's daughter as one of their pupils, and much to my disgust I was often sent for when parents, who were thinking of placing their children at the school, came to inspect it. I can see myself, a small, pale, painfully thin child, with hands that were so tiny and so thin that my schoolfellows likened them to birds' claws. I hated to be sent for, and to be introduced as "the daughter of the author of *The Gentle Life*"; I resented being stared at by rich, handsomely dressed women, who

looked their astonishment. I had read *Nicholas Nickleby*, and used to think of Wackford Squeers, who looked so well and fat, and I wondered the Misses Dawson did not send for a Miss Stone, the daughter of a wholesale purveyor of meat, who was a dark-haired, rosy-cheeked, pretty girl, whom we all admired.

When I came out from these interviews I had to run the gauntlet of the twenty odd pupils' curiosity and chaff.

"Well, little Frissie," they would say, "what was she like this time?" and I would give them an imitation of the rich woman, with her *pince-nez*, and her astonishment at my smallness; her comment when I was shutting the door: "Oh, poor little thing, she looks as if her bones would come through her skin—and what a churchyard cough she has!" This, and "Oh, poor child, how delicate! she isn't long for this world, any one can see," were the usual formulæ.

The girls used to roar with laughter at my mimicry; but they chaffed me unmercifully about my thinness and my cough, which was very hollow-sounding. My heart was often full of disgust and anger, and one day, having the toothache very badly, I lost my temper, and striking my hand on the schoolroom table, cried out:

"I won't be looked at any more as the daughter of the author of *The Gentle Life*, and I don't care

if I have a churchyard cough ; I *will* grow up and get married—and the first present my husband shall buy me will be a set of new teeth ! ”

There were screams of laughter at this speech, and in the midst of it, as I was being carried round the room in the arms of a tall, stalwart girl, whose hair I was pulling to make her release me, the door was thrown open and Miss Dawson came in. The laughter was hushed instantly, and I was allowed to slip to the floor.

“ Christabel and Geraldine Massey, and Laura Hain Friswell,” said Miss Dawson (she never forgot the *Hain*). Christabel, a good-looking girl, very like her father, rose, followed by her sister, a pale, thin child, and I came last. We did not know what would happen, but thought we were in for a scolding. But the Massey girls gave a cry of delight, and were embracing a short, bright-eyed, alert man, with bushy curly hair, who stood in the hall with his back to the door, while a few paces from him, standing up tall and ghostly, was a lady, whose clothes seemed to have been huddled on her, and might, if she moved, drop off. It was a summer evening, and I believe Mrs. Massey was dressed in pale muslin, and wore a scarf and bonnet. I know the limp dress clung round her, and I can see the evening sunlight from the schoolroom window shining on her impassive face and quiet eyes, which had a far-away look in them. I stopped short on the mat

and gazed at her, and so prevented Miss Dawson, who was behind me, from shutting the schoolroom door.

The poet we all knew, for he often came to see his daughters ; but Mrs. Massey we had never seen, and there was some curiosity about her, for we had heard she was a clairvoyant, was often ill, and walked in her sleep. I had no idea what a clairvoyant was, but to walk in one's sleep seemed to me a ghost-like and uncomfortable proceeding. Christabel and Geraldine, though they talked of their father, seldom mentioned their mother. Mr. Massey had once or twice talked to me, and even taken me for a walk with his daughters. I was proud of his notice, but I was always nervous and uncomfortable. I think it was his eyes that frightened me, they were very bright and piercing. There were, too, some curious stories about the poet, stories that made the girls look upon him as peculiar. It was long before the days of hypnotism and thought-reading, but mesmerism and spiritualism were very much in vogue. I had seen a man named Anderson, who called himself "The Wizard of the North," perform some wonderful conjuring tricks, and mesmerise people till they did all kinds of absurd things ; and when one of the Massey girls remarked that "papa made mamma do anything he wanted by only looking at her," I thought Gerald Massey must be a wizard, and I did not care to be in his company, and would rather he did not look at *me*.

Mrs. Massey was very delicate, and it was said the

poet did all his own housekeeping, and even bought his children's clothes. This seemed to the schoolgirls not a man's business, and the elder girls did not scruple to laugh and jeer, which hurt his daughters' feelings, making the elder indignant, and the younger cry ; and I, who hated such behaviour, and would not have literary people laughed at on any account, stoutly maintained that to do the housekeeping and to buy clothes was peculiar to poets, and therefore quite right. As I was looked upon as an authority on literary manners, if not matters, the chaff ceased. I was also fond of telling fairy tales to the little children, and Geraldine Massey, though about my own age, was very young for her years, which were not more than ten or eleven.

The reason I was sent for, I learnt afterwards, was that Mr. Massey had said his wife wished to see me ; but when we came she had lapsed into a dreamy state, and was quite oblivious, I believe, of any one's presence ; she noticed neither her children nor me, and the poet spoke to her once or twice before she answered.

"My dear, my love," he said, "look—this is little Miss Hain Friswell, that Geraldine is always talking about, who tells such pretty fairy tales ; you wanted to see her."

"Did I ?" said Mrs. Massey, in a monotonous voice.

Mr. Massey glanced at me quickly and smiled ; then he gave his wife's arm a little shake,

"Why, yes, of course you did ; you wanted to thank her for being so kind to Geraldine," he said quickly.

"Poor Geraldine. I am glad she's kind," said Mrs. Massey.

"Go and shake hands," whispered Miss Dawson, giving me a little push forward. I went and put out my hand, and Mr. Massey put his wife's into it. I held it, it was cold and clammy ; the tears began to roll down my face.

"She's crying," said Mrs. Massey, in her curiously far-away voice, that had a note of faint astonishment in it, though she did not look at me. "Why does she cry ?"

"She is a very nervous child, and she has the toothache," remarked Miss Dawson hurriedly.

"It's not that—it's quite gone—but—oh, you look so ill," I exclaimed sorrowfully, staring up into Mrs. Massey's face. My earnestness, and the intensity of my gaze, seemed to attract her attention for the first time ; she almost smiled, and some kind of feeling passed over her impassive face.

"I shall be better soon," she said, but she did not look at me ; she stared over my head, over Miss Dawson and the girls crowding behind her—out towards the setting sun that streamed through the schoolroom window her gaze went, and remained for a moment ; then her husband touched her gently and drew her hand through his arm.

"We must be going—say good-bye," he said

cheerfully, and he opened the hall door and led her out. She never came again, and died soon after ; but how many weeks or months I am not sure.

In the little whitewashed Baptist Chapel I heard Thomas Cooper, the atheist and Chartist lecturer, after he had turned Christian, and was trying to undo all the harm he said he had done. He lectured for six nights, telling us much of the story of his life. Some of us girls went every evening ; I believe I went to all the six ; I know I was at the last, when all the people rose and gave him a regular ovation, almost cheering him in their excitement. I, instead of following Miss Dawson to the door, marched up the chapel, followed by several girls, and as he came down the pulpit steps I looked up in his face and held out my hand. I wanted to wish him "God speed" in his good work, and had made up a neat little speech ; but when it came to the point I was too much alarmed to deliver it. Thomas Cooper smiled and took my hand—it seemed swallowed in his large palm—and he looked down on me from what seemed to me a great height ; but I doubt if he was pleased with the result of my enthusiasm, for my example was followed by the whole of the people, who scrambled out of the pews and over the seats to shake him by the hand, till at last he was glad to take refuge in the vestry.

CHAPTER V

MR. EDWARD DRAPER, A LITERARY SOLICITOR—SOME MEMORABLE DAYS
—I LEAVE SCHOOL—DR. BENJAMIN WARD RICHARDSON—AN
AWKWARD POSITION—MR. EDWARD CLARKE—DR. PANKHURST—A
SUCCESSFUL CASE—A LARGE CHILDREN'S PARTY.

ONE of my father's oldest friends was a Mr. Edward Draper, a solicitor who lived in Westminster. He was legal adviser to Albert Smith and many literary men—indeed, he was quite a literary lawyer. He was a very eccentric man, with a great amount of dry humour, which found its vent in prose, or verse, and in very clever sketches. He contributed to most of the papers and magazines of the day, was a friend of Edmund Yates, Sala, Godfrey Turner, Mortimer Collins, and most of the journalists of that time. He had a very tall, handsome, cheerful wife, and they used to keep open house. They were great friends of my father and mother, and very kind to us children; in fact, Mr. Draper would do the most outrageous things to amuse children. I remember on one occasion when we were there he took us all down into the kitchen, and, producing some small brass cannon, he fired holes through the kitchen door. Another time Mr. and Mrs. Draper and several

grown-up people, the Philosopher and I, sat at a round table, putting our hands on it, while two snakes crawled round and would either crawl over our hands, or, rearing their heads, dart out their tongues and hiss at us. I did not like this exhibition at all, and kept dropping my hands into my lap as soon as the snakes came near. Mr. Draper assured me that they would not hurt me, but I could not be induced to keep my hands on the table—the snakes made me shudder. But there was a game we all enjoyed, and that was when Mr. Draper, pretending to be the ring master of a circus, would set the doors and folding doors of his dining-room open, build up a barricade of two or three chairs, and standing in one room cracking a whip, would make his large retriever race round and round, faster and faster, leaping over the chairs. The dog's barks, the cracking of the whip—and he knew how to crack it in the scientific manner—and our yells and shouts, made such a babel that I wonder now we did not rouse the indignation of all Pimlico.

I was at school three years, and my father and mother came down to see me every term. In the summer my father would make up a party, order a certain number of picnic hampers from Fortnum & Mason, and hire an omnibus with three or four horses. Mr. and Mrs. Draper and their friends, Mr. and Mrs. Godfrey Turner and some of their friends, Mr. and Mrs. W—— (whose daughter was at school with me), Andrew Halliday, Ashby Sterry, and several

other literary people, would join, and drive down to Watford ; then we would have a picnic in the Park, or in a wood near the Park, or a cold collation at the Essex Arms. Those were red-letter days, for every one was so full of fun and jollity. Though I and my friend Bessie W—— did not have the fun of the drive, we returned to school in the evening loaded with good things, besides the hampers our mothers always brought us. What feasts we schoolgirls had ! at which I sang the songs and repeated the speeches, as far as I could, that I had heard at home or at the picnic. I had very strong lungs in spite of my cough, and I imitated Mr. Draper singing “An ‘Orrible Tale,” and a parody of Godfrey Turner’s on “Hoop-de-doo-dum-doo,” Mr. Warwick Reynolds’s “Hot Coddlings,” and another gentleman who sang “Maid of Athens,” and who, I declared, always said “by those *lips* whose jetty fringe.” The Misses Dawson were generally out when Bessie W—— and I gave a supper party, and our parties were so popular that the big girls deigned to come—indeed, they insisted on being invited.

Schools in those days were not what they are now, and the Misses Dawson, as I have said, were old-fashioned. We had no desks, but sat upon wooden forms without backs and wrote with our paper or exercise-books lying flat upon the table. The only seats we had with backs were very tall chairs with very small seats—about half the size of the top of an office

stool—and very high straight backs. This luxurious type of chair was styled by the schoolgirls “Aunt Esther’s Lounge.” Who “Aunt Esther” was I do not know—if she ever existed is very doubtful ; but we all avoided her “lounges ” and preferred the forms, hard and firing though they were. I, being a weak girl, was easily tired, and in the three years I was at Watford, I contracted curvature of the spine, which the doctors attributed to my sitting upon hard seats without backs.

Directly it was found I was growing crooked I was taken away, and after much consultation and a variety of opinions I became one of Dr. Benjamin Ward Richardson’s patients, and was treated by him for seven years. I shall never forget those walks with my mother from our house in Great Russell Street, through the squares, to see the doctor and instrument maker. I hated the dull streets and squares and the long hot walk ; but I had to take a certain amount of exercise, and the jolting of omnibuses and cabs was bad for me. Dr. Richardson lived in Hinde Street, Manchester Square, and the large, gloomy room in which my mother and I used to wait, with the two tall, melancholy indiarubber plants in the window, is indelibly photographed on my mind. I can never imagine why doctors’ waiting-rooms are so gloomy. It is bad enough to go to a doctor, but to wait in those awful rooms is torture. How well I can remember the dusty Turkey carpet, the heavy, dark

furniture, the curtains of so invisible a green that they were almost black! There was a tall bookcase of medical works—to read the titles would have made one's hair stand on end; fortunately the bookcase was locked, or the patients might have committed suicide, or died of fright, before the doctor was ready for them. There was a bust of Darwin in one corner, Huxley in another, and Harvey stood between the windows. They were all of them ghastly and very dusty; I thought them hideous and longed to smash them. Upon the mantelpiece were three massive bronzes; the clock had a gruesome figure of Time, which pointed one bony finger to the dial, and leered at you with a deathlike stare, or so I imagined as I prowled round the room, taking note of everything. The atmosphere was always hot and airless, for the windows never seemed to be open, and I never saw any one but ourselves in the room; but that was probably because we were the last people the doctor saw. The most lively paper on the table was *Punch*, and that we often found dreary in the extreme. The only sound one heard in the silent house was a faint noise that now and then penetrated the double doors of the next room, which was the doctor's consulting-room, and to which I knew we should be summoned sooner or later. How I dreaded it, and how I tried to occupy my thoughts! because I could not help being on the *qui vive* for every sound. My imagination was vivid, and I sometimes thought I heard a moan

or a cry, and then I fancied some of the toads, cats, and rabbits were being vivisected, or that some human being was in the throes of death. But these fears vanished when I saw Dr. Richardson—he always looked so good-tempered, cheerful, and kind ; and yet I knew that when I went into that consulting-room I should see the rabbits in hutches outside the window, and that there was a kind of aquarium, in which several toads and other creatures were kept. I remember one day seeing a rabbit lying apparently dead upon the table, but the doctor assured me that he had only been trying an anæsthetic upon it, and that it would soon come to life again ; he also said that that particular rabbit was very fond of anæsthetics.

On my first visit he ordered me cod-liver oil, and the strongest preparation of iron, and he very obligingly poured my mother out a wine-glass of the oil, asking her to taste it, and highly recommending it. As she refused it, he said, “Then I’ll drink it myself,” and he held up the glass to the light, showing us what a fine colour it was, and putting me in mind of an advertisement I saw in the omnibuses, of a man holding up a glass of wine and exclaiming “What ! Beeswing !” We duly admired the colour, and Dr. Richardson drank it off, and licked his lips as if he had had a treat. On another occasion I complained that the iron turned everything I wore that was silver, even to my thimble which I sometimes carried in my pocket, black.

"That's nothing, my dear girl," returned the doctor. "I gave one young lady so much cod-liver oil and iron that it turned her hair black ; and the oil oozed through her skin to such an extent that her relations, and even her lover, could not come near her."

On hearing this appalling state of things I was silent. "Be thankful," he continued, "that you are too young to have a lover, and that I've not treated you so badly, for your hair's as fair as ever."

I was thankful, and told him so, at which he laughed heartily, and looked at me in a quizzical manner. I know he wondered if I believed his story, which of course I did not ; but I thought if he could poke fun at me, I would puzzle him. We were always very good friends ; he praised me for my perseverance and attention to his orders, and said I deserved to get well. My father had thought that riding would do me good ; but any violent exercise was stopped. I was not allowed to write, and had to learn all my lessons lying on my back on a board. I was taken for a short walk every day, and except at meals was always lying down. To vary the monotony of lying on my board, I sometimes, in the late afternoon, or evening, lay upon the drawing-room sofa. I used to read a great deal, and often dozed off to sleep. One evening I woke up, with the servant opening the drawing-room door. The light from the gas in the hall streamed into the dark room ;

she set a chair in the light, and said, "Will you take a seat here, sir? I will fetch a lamp and tell Mr. Friswell you are here."

She left the room, and I found myself in an awkward position. The room was very dark, and, besides that, the high end of the sofa completely concealed me from the visitor's view. Nor could I see him. I did not know what to do, but thought it best to lie still and try not to breathe. This I tried, but it was a failure, for I found I had to draw a deep breath, which sounded like a prolonged sigh. I then rose softly. The visitor had risen also, but could not see me in the shadow, though I had a full view of him where he stood in the stream of light. He was a man about thirty ; short, pale, and with a strongly marked face, which I at once felt confidence in and liked. He was peering about with rather a perplexed look upon his face. I emerged into the light, and he stared at me for a moment in the greatest astonishment. I moved forward and held out my hand ; he took it, still looking perplexed.

"I am very sorry I startled you," I said ; "I tried not to breathe, but I could not manage it."

"It would be difficult," he replied, and added : "I am delighted to find that I have strayed into the castle of the Sleeping Beauty. It is a piece of good luck that I did not expect."

Like all very young people, I hated to be laughed at, so I made no reply. He then said :

"I see I am making a mistake, and that you must be the Fair One with the Golden Locks."

"My name," I said gravely, "is Laura Friswell."

"And I am Edward Clarke, at your service," he replied, with a very polite bow.

This was my first introduction to Mr. Edward Clarke (now Sir Edward Clarke), who afterwards became a frequent visitor. We all grew fond of the clever young barrister, and my father, who was always enthusiastic, used to declare that he should live to see Mr. Clarke upon the woolsack. I used to be very much amused at his pungent, sarcastic talk, and his flattering attention to the ladies.

At this time I remember an incident that greatly impressed me. It was a sunny evening in early summer, and my mother was sitting at needlework, near one of the three windows in the drawing-room, while my father was talking to a Dr. Pankhurst (a barrister), a great advocate for the "Women's Rights" movement, and a lecturer on the subject. He was a very small man and very enthusiastic. He talked well, but had unfortunately a very high, squeaky voice. He wanted my father and mother to go to a lecture on Women's Rights, given by Miss Lydia Becker, but my mother shook her head and declined to be interested—she was so "under the rule of a man," Dr. Pankhurst averred ; while my father laughed and pooh-poohed the idea of women's rights or wrongs, and advised Dr. Pankhurst to marry Miss Becker.

“I will !” he cried, becoming very heated ; starting out of his chair and rising up on his toes in his excitement, he dashed the clenched knuckles of his right hand into the palm of his left, and shouted, “Friswell, I’ll convince you, or I’ll annihilate you !”

My mother broke into a peal of laughter, for my father looked as if he could have picked up the little man and dropped him out of window. Fortunately a diversion was created at this moment ; the door was thrown open by the servant, and Mr. Clarke entered, exclaiming jubilantly :

“Congratulate me ! I’ve got my woman off !”

My mother seemed taken aback, and shook hands with him in silence, but I jumped out of my seat and cried :

“What ?—that murderess ! Then you’d no right to do such a thing !”

Every one was thunderstruck at my vehemence, and Mr. Clarke was speechless.

“You know you said you thought she did it,” I explained more quietly.

“Oh yes, she undoubtedly did it,” returned Mr. Clarke cheerfully.

“Then I call it very wicked of *you* to help her to escape !” said I indignantly. Every one laughed, and Mr. Clarke answered :

“I was bound to do the best I could for my client. You must blame the jury who acquitted her. And then you know I believe in Women’s Rights ; her

husband was a brute, and she poisoned him. That was quite as it should be—now, wasn't it, Pankhurst?"

But the little man was silent, and after some more talk about the case the conversation drifted into happier subjects.

But I heard none of it, I was lost in thought : it was such a new idea to me that lawyers should defend people they knew to be criminals, and to the extent of saving them from death, that it set me pondering, and it was some time before I could see the matter in the right light. I was not allowed to read the newspapers, so it was only from the conversation of my elders that I heard of the case. I know my opinion of Mr. Clarke was considerably altered by what I considered his want of morality in getting a criminal off, and rejoicing that he had done so. For a long time I never saw him without wondering what dreadful character he had been defending, and I used to be astonished that he could laugh and sing sentimental songs when he knew so much wickedness went on. His neat appearance and the gardenia in his button-hole were also a surprise to me ; I believe I thought sackcloth and ashes would have been more appropriate for the advocate of sinners. I wondered how his wife liked his having such clients, and I had a great mind to ask her opinion on the subject of defending criminals ; but I noticed she was always very much wrapped up in her children and her house, and I therefore came to the conclusion that she took no

interest in such matters, and would look upon me as peculiar ; and if there was anything I dreaded it was to be thought unlike other girls.

It was somewhere about this time that my father gave a large juvenile party, to which many very well known people came and danced and sang, even dressing up to amuse us. I remember Mr. Warwick Reynolds dressed up as a woman (my grandmother lending him a dress and an old bonnet and shawl) to sing "Hot Coddlings," while Mr. Ashby Sterry, a very handsome young man (like the portraits of Sir Philip Sidney), danced a polka with me, stooping down to my height ; how he managed to dance with his legs so bent I cannot imagine, but I know he did it very successfully. We youngsters were delighted, and it was one of the features of the evening. My father was particularly fond of cold punch, and had made some for the elders of the party, while home-made lemonade was provided for the children. By some mistake we tasted the punch, and after that we would have "the other lemonade," as we called it ; the waiters artfully and fortunately diluted it, but when the grown people went down to supper the punch was conspicuous by its absence. Only a few months ago, at a party given by the Women Journalists to welcome their President, Lady Sarah Wilson, I met Mr. Sterry ; we had not seen each other for many years, but he recalled that children's party, and reminded me of the incident of the cold punch.

CHAPTER VI

"THE BAYARD SERIES"—ANECDOTES OF MR. SWINBURNE—SWINBURNE COMES TO TEA—THE RALSTON RUSSIAN STORIES—MR. SWINBURNE AGAIN.

NOT being able to go to school, I had a governess, a very good-looking young lady, who was fond of literature, and delighted to see some of the celebrated men and women who came to our house in Great Russell Street. Miss W—— often acted as secretary to my father, who was at this time editing "The Bayard Series," a set of pleasure books of literature. The story of the Chevalier Bayard, being the first volume of the series, gave it its name; many well-known men and women wrote essays, or introductions, to the various volumes, and my father had asked Swinburne to write an essay on Coleridge, as an introduction to *Christabel*, and the lyrical and imaginative poems of Coleridge. Swinburne was then at the height of his fame, and my governess and I were most anxious to see him.

We had heard many stories about him from gushing young ladies and enthusiastic old ones. One young lady, I remember, declared that in her opinion poets should be exempt from all criticism, that they should

not be judged by ordinary standards, nor have anything to do with mundane affairs. "Fancy," she said, "such a genius as Swinburne opening his own street door!—why, the Angel Gabriel ought to descend and do it for him." My father laughed, while I stared and wondered; it was some time before it dawned upon me that it was a silly, exaggerated way of talking.

I do not know if Mr. Swinburne would like to be called a man of genius; it would certainly appear that he objected to being considered "a literary man," for he once publicly said that he was not a literary man, and he would, rather than otherwise, cast scorn upon living by his pen. But I have noticed that those who are so indignant at being considered to live by their pens do not refuse the honorarium offered by the publisher, but on the contrary are particularly good men of business. But this they no doubt do purely for the good of us unfortunate creatures who write for a living as well as for Fame.

The eulogies lavished upon the poet were great, and his genius had no more sincere admirer than my father, who writes of him as "a poet of rare order—forcible and free, full of fire, dash, feeling, and expression. A poet who at one leap sat himself at the side of the crowned singers; who divides Olympus with Tennyson and disputes Empire with Browning."

This may seem somewhat extravagant language; but all who admire Mr. Swinburne's genius will

admit that it is true and well deserved. As I have said, my father was an enthusiast, and, according to Mr. Westland Marston and others, he was no mean poet himself; he was, too, always generous in his admiration of others. In an essay on Mr. Swinburne I find that he condemned and deplored the poet's want of Christianity; but I have never heard him speak more highly of the quality of brain of any one than he did of Swinburne's.

As the photograph of the head of a person gives little idea of height, and as I had always heard the poet spoken of as an “intellectual giant,” I drew my own picture of this wonderful genius, and the poet was not only a giant in intellect.

My father made this announcement at dinner one day: “Mr. Swinburne is coming to see me to-morrow.”

My governess exclaimed: “Oh, do let us see him!”

“Do!” I echoed fervently.

“No, no,” said my father, “it is business; we are going to talk of Coleridge. He must be shown into the study.”

“What time is he coming?” asked my mother.

“Between four and five.”

“Then he can easily have tea with us, and you can both retire to the study afterwards.”

“Yes,” said Miss W——. “Now don't be obdurate, Mr. Friswell.”

"But I do not think Mr. Swinburne likes ladies' society ; they make him nervous, he says."

Miss W—— laughed. "Oh, if he is a misogynist, that's just the reason we ought to see him, isn't it, Mrs. Friswell ? "

My mother agreed. "Leave it to me," she said, "I'll manage it."

My father laughed. "I believe he'll run away," he said.

"Oh no," replied my mother ; "he's a gentleman ; he won't do that."

"Very well, if you are so determined," said my father, in a resigned manner ; and then it was that he turned to me and remarked, "It is a mistake to know public people, Lollie."

I did not agree, for I wanted to see and know my favourite authors and actors, and I said so.

"Why destroy your illusions ? " asked my father. "That author, whose characters say such charmingly brilliant things, whose men are athletes, or scholars full of epigram, is himself a nervous little man with sloping shoulders. There's no brilliant conversation in him ; he looks melancholy and bored in company. Read and enjoy his books, but don't wish to see him ; you would not like it, nor would he."

"But," said I, "you won't let me read Mr. Swinburne's books ; you took the book away, just as you did when I was reading *Curiosities of Crime*."

"That," said my father, "was the Newgate Calendar."

He paused, and added thoughtfully, "I do not know that I would not rather you read it than Swinburne's poems ; but when I spoke of authors, I meant authors in general, and not any one in particular."

I was still thinking of the poet.

"What does he mean by

"Come down and redeem us from virtue,
Our Lady of Pain?"

"What indeed?" said my father.

"That was the last line I read," I said, "and I do want to know who our Lady of Pain is."

Nobody seemed inclined to enlighten me, and I knew by the way the conversation was changed it was no use to ask again. But I was determined to see this wonderful man ; all I had heard about his nervousness made me pity him, for I knew what it was to be terribly nervous. My father, mother, and sometimes my governess used to scold me about it, telling me, "If I would sit in a corner dumb, I should be taken for a fool."

The day Swinburne was to come I had neuralgia very, very badly, and was confined to my bed ; but I insisted on getting up, and a maid dressed me, for in those days I could do little for myself. I went down to the drawing-room, where there was a glorious fire, and seated myself on a low stool by the side of the hearth. The pain in my face and head was terrible, but I was determined not to give in ; I even made

a feeble little joke, and said "I thought *I* was 'our Lady of Pain,' " at which my governess looked shocked, and advised me not to say so to my father or mother. "Then tell me who she is," said I; but either she could not, or would not, and she busied herself with the cups and saucers. My mother entered, and presently we heard a cab draw up and a sounding knock at the door, then steps up the stairs, and the door was thrown open and the maid said, "Mr. Swinburne."

A little man walked straight into the room; his head, which was crowned by a quantity of auburn hair, was held high, his eyes stared straight in front of him, and he was evidently quite unconscious that he was not alone in the room. My mother walked forward and held out her hand. He started, and dropped his hat; my governess went forward and picked it up; he almost snatched it from her.

"Won't you sit down?" said my mother, indicating a chair which Miss W—— drew up to the tea-table.

"I—I think there must be some mistake," murmured Mr. Swinburne.

"Not at all," said my mother; "we were expecting you; Mr. Friswell will be here in a moment. Do let me give you some tea."

Mr. Swinburne sat down on the edge of a chair. He bent slightly forward, his arms resting on his knees, his hat balanced between his fingers, and he kept swinging it backwards and forwards, just as I had seen

Mr. Toole do in a farce ; he dropped it and picked it up several times. I think he was about twenty-nine or thirty years old at this time—not more than five feet six in height, and he had that peculiar pallor which goes with auburn hair ; and this paleness was heightened by study, enthusiasm, and the fierce, rebellious spirit which seemed to animate that fragile body, and which glows and burns in his writings.

My mother and Miss W—— did all they could to put him at ease, and I sat and repented that I had ever wished to see him, for I pitied him intensely, he seemed so very nervous. He dropped his hat so many times that Miss W——, when he rose to hand me some bread-and-butter, took the hat and hid it in a recess.

My father now appeared, and by his conversational powers and tact soon set Mr. Swinburne quite at his ease. He ceased to fidget, and talked of Coleridge and other poets in a most interesting manner—to hear him and my father was an intellectual treat. Mr. Swinburne became all fire and enthusiasm, and looked and seemed quite a different man ; we were all charmed with him. He stayed from two to three hours, and it was not at all too long, and he left saying he would soon come again.

On another occasion I saw Mr. Swinburne at St. George's Hall, where most of the literary people of the time were gathered, by invitation, to hear Mr. Ralston tell some Russian stories. The poet was in

the front row, surrounded by a bevy of the youth and beauty of the time. These young women were all a good many years my seniors. They were admirers of the Pre-Raphaelite school, and were devoted to Rossetti, Burne-Jones, and William Morris. They dressed in limp and dowdy greens, and wore lace that looked as if it would be all the better for a good wash, turned up their eyes and gushed when they talked, and did their hair in what I heard a lady of the time call "the bird's-nest fashion." This was, in a state of great confusion all over the head and right down to the eyebrows, and then, as if to prevent its flying away, three rows of velvet, dotted with jet or steel, bound it down. Those were the days when to be eccentric in dress was thought a mark of genius, and these young ladies, being admirers of the Rossetti and Burne-Jones types of beauty, were pale and willowy in the extreme. I was not stout, nor very tall, and decidedly pale in those days, but I used to feel gigantic by the side of them ; and I think, with my youthfully outspoken manner, my short skirts, and quantity of flowing hair, they looked on me as a young savage, or, worse still, a Philistine. They attracted and interested me very much, but they were never very cordial to me ; and though I knew them well—that is, we often met—yet if I joined them they always left off turning up their eyes and clasping their hands, and said nothing interesting at all.

On this particular evening I was anxious to join

them, for they seemed to be having what we should now call "a good time." They were attracting a great deal of attention, which I had been taught was bad style. The poet was laughing very much, and so were his satellites, but I had an idea they were laughing at, instead of with, Mr. Swinburne ; and if there was anything I resented more than another, it was for any one to laugh at a man of letters. I had scarcely read a line of Mr. Swinburne's poems, but to me he was a great genius, and therefore to be treated with deference. Next to geniuses I hated women to appear ridiculous and to be laughed at, and I wished those girls were not so limp in appearance and floppy in manner. I was sure they would not be if they could hear what people said, and I knew the effect I had on them. I knew that if I went there they would sit up and behave in a more dignified manner. So I rose to join them, when a well-known man said to my father, in what he meant for a whisper :

"Don't let your daughter go over there, Friswell."

My father immediately told me to stay where I was, so I re-seated myself ; but, remembering the poet's dislike to ladies' society, I made one more effort to rescue him, and whispered :

"Do ask Mr. Swinburne to come over here to us, papa ; he won't feel nervous then, and people won't whisper and stare so."

But my father went on talking with his friends, so my good intentions were frustrated.

My attention was soon riveted upon the platform, for Mr. Ralston had come in, and there was a storm of applause. The Russian stories were a great success. I especially liked one about a witch whose room was ornamented with the skulls of her victims. The entertainment was repeated several times ; but I fancy this first night was *the night*, certainly as far as the audience went, for most, if not all, the celebrated men and women in literature, art, and the drama were there.

The next time I saw the poet was so many years afterwards that I do not like to count them. It was on Wimbledon Common, where he walks twice daily. It was a lovely summer morning, between ten and eleven o'clock. I was sitting on a seat with a friend, when she said :

“Look, do you know who this is ?”

I looked up, and saw a thin little man, with almost white hair, his arms hanging at his sides, a soft felt hat rather on the back of his head, walking with head held up and back, and eyes gazing straight in front, seemingly unconscious of what they saw. Since last we met he had very much altered, but I knew him at once, and I recalled him again as I first saw him.

The Common and the sunlight faded from my sight, and I saw the interior of a London drawing-room on a dull afternoon. Four people were sitting round a large fire, while a girl sat with her head leaning against the jamb of the marble mantelpiece, gazing at them.

What a picture they made—the poet with his bright hair, pale intellectual face, and glowing eyes; my father with his distinguished manner, iron-grey hair, bright complexion, and merry blue eyes; my pretty young governess, and my gentle, placid mother, whose dreamy manner had given place to one of keen interest as she listened to Swinburne talking of Coleridge. I could recall his gestures, his eloquence, almost hear again the tones of his voice, and feel his enthusiasm. I know that our deep attention spurred him on, that my father's apt comments still further encouraged him; that he loved his art and was carried away by it there was no doubt. He said he would be sure to come again, "and soon,"—but, alas! there are red-letter days in one's life that never return. As I sat on the Common that morning I realised strongly and sadly, as I have so often, how inexorable Time is, and I told myself that all the people whose shadows I was recalling were dead—as dead as my father, who had been in his grave for twenty years.

CHAPTER VII

“THE ANGEL EPPS”—A GLIMPSE OF MRS. LANGTRY—NICKNAMES—MR. DU MAURIER ENJOYS A HEARTY LAUGH—MRS. DU MAURIER AND HER HUSBAND’S SKETCHES—THE LAST TIME I SAW MR. DU MAURIER.

AT the time of which I am writing there lodged over Pears’ Soap shop in Great Russell Street, Bloomsbury, Mr. and Mrs. George Du Maurier ; and at the same time, or it may be a little later, Henry Irving, now Sir Henry Irving, had apartments near the top of the street ; and Alma Tadema, now Sir Alma Tadema, came courting his charming wife, who was then Miss Laura Epps, or, as some of the Pre-Raphaelite people called her, “the Angel Epps.” My governess and I often saw Sir Alma Tadema’s brougham with the artist in it, as it drove up the street. Miss Epps was of course well known. I remember meeting her at the Academy, in a gooseberry-coloured cashmere gown of the very limp and æsthetic order, a white tulle hat with a wisp of white tulle, which came from the back of the hat, wound round her neck, and a lace cape, that the old lady I was with said “would be all the better for a little soap and water.” This was not in my opinion an angelic-looking costume,

and I wondered why they called her "the Angel Epps," and came to the conclusion that it must be because of her hair, which glistened like a halo and was of the colour which has since been called "Titian red."

That same afternoon I had the pleasure of catching a glimpse of Mrs. Langtry, then at the height of her fame. How the people pushed and crushed, getting up on seats to look at her ! I, urged thereto by the lady I was with, got up on a seat, and over the heads of the people caught a glimpse of a lady with brown hair, a pale face, and large grey eyes.

I remember very well the first time I saw Mr. and Mrs. George Du Maurier. It was at one of my mother's tea-parties, where so many literary and other friends dropped in. Mr. Du Maurier was suffering very much from his eyes, and wore a green shade over them ; he seemed very quiet and depressed, which was not to be wondered at, but fortunately I was destined to make him laugh heartily, and he declared "a hearty laugh did him more good than any amount of medicine."

It happened in this way. A Dr. F——, a very charming man, was a constant visitor at our house. He and his wife lived close by, and scarcely a day passed but one or both used to drop in to see us. I can see him now in my mind's eye, as I saw him then entering the room ; a tall, lank man, with an M.B. waistcoat, a professional look, and spectacles of the sort called "nose-nippers." He was received

with acclamation by my father, and he went round shaking every one effusively by the hand (to his especial favourites he always put both his hands round their one); he smiled in a delighted way, and said something complimentary to every one, nearly always prefacing his speech with "God bless me!" while his eyeglasses dangled about in the most lively manner, and, catching the sunlight, reflected a dozen little, broken, dancing lights upon the ceiling.

Captain and Mrs. Burton, Mr. Du Maurier, every one, smiled at and welcomed him, and having gone the round of the room he finally subsided on the sofa near Mrs. Burton. I can hear the buzz of conversation, and even catch the sound of Mrs. Burton's silvery laughter; how handsome and charming she was, and how I admired her, and wished my hair was dark like hers and my mother's! Then I turned my eyes to Mr. Du Maurier; I can see him sitting with his back to the light, silent and sad, or so I thought; I always pitied sick or afflicted people. It was then that I rose to hand him some bread-and-butter, when up jumped Dr. F——, and taking the plate from me, said:

"God bless me! Petrarch cannot allow *his Laura* to hand the bread-and-butter."

I was completely nonplussed. I had never, to my knowledge, heard of Petrarch, and thought the Doctor must have said, or at any rate meant, Patriarch. Now Dr. F——, though about forty-five or fifty, and

therefore quite old to a young person, was always in such a radiant humour that he did not seem old. He was clean shaven, and his hair was rather long, lank, and very black. He was not strong, or he would have been a very active man ; as it was, his activity took the direction of words, and in a very amusing way. He used to speak with a curious little catch in his voice, as if his eagerness made him out of breath, which I really think was the case. Now this gentleman was not at all my idea of a Patriarch ; I could not picture him either as Abraham, Isaac, or Jacob, who should have white hair, flowing beards, and a serene and stately manner. As I sat at my mother's side I was very much puzzled, and, watching my opportunity, when every one was busy talking I whispered :

“What does Dr. F—— mean by calling himself my Patriarch ?”

My mother turned red and then began to laugh ; she was of course asked what the joke was, and had to explain. Every one was vastly amused, especially Mr. Du Maurier, who threw back his head and laughed heartily, declaring it was good enough for *Punch*, and thereby causing me to avoid that periodical for a very long time ; for if there was anything young people of *that* time hated, it was to be “put into the papers,” and I had several lively recollections of appearing in print. I looked askance at Mr. Du Maurier, and retired to my favourite recess, where Dr. F—— ultimately found me, and told me about

Petrarch, and advised me to read his sonnets ; but for ever after he was called "my Patriarch," or "Petrarch," and to him I was always "Petrarch's Laura."

There was not much leisure for a busy author or artist in those days, but there was more than there seems now, for people did not make such a business of amusement ; they found time to call informally upon their friends, which is really in my opinion the pleasantest way of visiting, for the large entertainments that are now so fashionable are very boring. People have no time to become more than acquaintances, so there is no friendship as there was in the old days ; one sees nothing of one's host and hostess, and hears no talk except upon trivialities ; in fact, the art of conversation is fast dying out, for how can one talk amongst an ever-increasing crowd, who stay a little while and move on to another entertainment ?

I fancy Mr. Du Maurier was not a very active man. I believe bodily exercise was irksome to him ; like all creative people, he was quiet and contemplative. I used to think his health was not good, but I believe that his eyes were the chief worry, and they I am sure troubled him very much at times. My father very often went in to see him, to smoke a pipe with him, and even after the Du Mauriers had left the neighbourhood he was as frequent a visitor as his very much occupied time would permit. My father was a very sociable man, and would always find time to visit a friend, and even to write an autograph letter or a verse for an

album ; he fancied people wished to compliment him when they asked for his autograph, and would go out of his way to gratify them ; he was rather amused at the fuss people made over such small matters, and not a little disgusted at what he considered the commercial spirit of the age, though it was nothing in those days to what it is now. I remember his coming home one evening and telling my mother the following story with a mixture of amusement and disgust.

“I heard that Du Maurier was ill, so I called there ; I found he had a cold, but was much better. He was up and in the drawing-room ; there were several people there. I had a long conversation with Mrs. Du Maurier about her husband’s work ; said how much I admired it, and so on. We were standing near a cabinet. Suddenly she pulled open a long, deep drawer. ‘Look !’ she said, ‘these are all his sketches, *every single one he has ever done* ; would you like to look over them ?’ I said I should be delighted, so we looked at several. Many were mere scraps, others very rough, and done on any odds and ends of paper. I asked her if she would give me one of these. ‘I cannot,’ she replied ; ‘I never give *one* away, or let him. If anything happens that he can’t draw, or if he were to die, I shall sell them’ ; and she added as she shut and locked the drawer, taking out the key, ‘*this is property*, you know.’”

No doubt this very business-like lady would have felt offended if my father had refused her an autograph,

or a verse for her album, for it is a peculiarity of "business-like people" that they resent that quality in others. But my father, as I have said, was very good-natured over such requests, and would write something in a few moments, and without that air of doing-an-inferior-being-an-overwhelming-favour that so many literary people affect.

Many years after I went to call on Mr. and Mrs. Du Maurier at their house in Hampstead. As I went into the drawing-room I was in fear and trepidation—would Mr. Du Maurier recall that ignorant mistake of mine? would he remember "Petrarch's Laura"? My Petrarch was dead; he never lived to grow old, but died, like my own father, "before the dreary age comes," which is perhaps best and happiest for those gentle and exuberant people whom one cannot imagine living to grow old and sad.

I was sitting thinking rather sadly of those past days, when the servant came back, and then told me Mrs. Du Maurier was out, but would I come into Mr. Du Maurier's room, as he would be very glad to see me. I went, and found the artist sitting alone and seemingly rather dull. He told me he was almost blind; and he spoke of my father's early death, of his hard work, his philanthropy and his Christianity. He talked of his own work, and seemed afraid he should not be able to keep on drawing much longer for *Punch*.

"You think I can see you," he said; "but though

I know you are quite near me, you are in a grey mist, and I cannot distinguish your features."

I was very much shocked to hear this, as his eyes looked fairly well ; I had seen them often looking worse, and I said so, for he was evidently much depressed about them. He talked of the old days in Great Russell Street, and said "that then was his happiest time, and those were the palmy days of *Punch*."

I sat and listened, and did all I could to cheer him, but I did not remind him of "my Patriarch." I doubt if it would have made him laugh so heartily as it did in the days when he was young ; not that he was old in years, it was his affliction that made him feel so. He had not at this time written *Trilby*. I never saw him after that book came out.

CHAPTER VIII

A QUEEN ANNE HOUSE—AN INDIAN PRINCE—A VISION OF THE PAST—
A LARGE “AT HOME.”

THERE still stands in Dean Street, Soho, an old house of the time of Queen Anne. It is sandwiched between the Royalty Theatre and a club, and in the sixties and seventies was tenanted by a diamond merchant. It was a house of questionable fame, for early in the last century it was inhabited by a celebrated doctor, to whom body-snatchers brought their booty. The body of the Italian boy, Carlo Ferrari, was brought to that house, and it was the discovery by the doctor that this boy had been *burked*—*i.e.* done to death by suffocation, or by having a pitch plaster pressed over his mouth—that led to the conviction of Bishop and Williams, his murderers.

The house was very large, with panelled rooms, ornamental ceilings, oak floors, and high carved mantelpieces. It had a well staircase, so wide and with such shallow oak steps that it was said a coach and horses could be driven up it. The balusters and rails were mahogany, and so were the doors of the rooms, but the latter had been painted. It had vast stone passages and kitchens, and some old rooms

across a yard at the back, which the jeweller used for workshops, but which the doctor had used as dissecting rooms. Halfway down the lower stairs was a deep hole in the thickness of the wall, where it was said the doctor had kept many a body. The hole was concealed by a sliding panel at that time, now it is bricked up, but there is still a door in the panelling where it was.

Mr. W——, the jeweller, was a great friend of my father ; he had a charming wife and two children, a boy and a girl. The boy was about the age of my elder brother (the Philosopher) and in my very youthful days he charmed me by always looking so neat and clean, which the Philosopher did not. One boy was strong and healthy, the other very delicate ; but this I did not realise. Little Miss W—— was some years younger than myself, and had been to Watford to school with me, and was my devoted friend.

The W——s entertained frequently, and gave large children's parties, the chief feature of which was a gigantic Christmas tree. They also gave grown-up parties, and I well remember my first grown-up dance took place in that old house. My mother would never let me be dressed in white, nor in muslin, like other girls ; I was too pale, she said, for white, and she was too much afraid of fire to let me wear muslin. So for this dance behold me in a dress of pearl-grey satin, not quite down to my ankles, for I was not

sixteen ; the skirt trimmed with three rows of royal blue velvet, and a broad band of the same finishing the square-necked bodice. I wore black silk open-work stockings, high-heeled shoes with buckles, and long black lace mittens. My quaint dress caused quite a number of remarks, for I heard people ask, "Who is that girl who looks as if she had stepped out of an old picture?" "She?—oh! she's the daughter of the author of *The Gentle Life*"—the old answer that I knew so well.

We had all been invited to this dance, but my father was ill, and my mother at home with him; my grandmother was with us, but was playing cards in another room, and I spent most of my time, when not dancing, in the conservatory listening to the songs and the applause which could be distinctly heard from the theatre next door. I fancy they were playing one of Burnand's burlesques. The conservatory was a favourite place for us girls and boys, for we could hear most of the songs very distinctly, and even the dancing of some of the performers. It was a most curious and weird sensation, something like a phonograph, only without the head-in-a-jug-like sound. At the further end of the conservatory nothing was heard of the music and dancing in the drawing-room, and I delighted to sit there and to pretend I was at the play.

At this party there were two Indians, one in the most gorgeous of dresses, literally covered with gold

embroidery and jewels. The centre jewel in his turban was a very large diamond, which sparkled like a miniature sun. The Indians seemed rather out of their element. They wandered about, and I often caught the smartly dressed one, whom the Philosopher and Nash W—— called “Old Koh-i-noor,” looking at me. He stood in a recess and looked very ornamental and imposing, and I thought added to the decorations of the room ; but I did not like it when he followed me into the conservatory and rolled his eyes and showed his white teeth in a smile that was intended to be charming, but which I thought alarming. I escaped into the dancing-room and sat down upon a rout seat against the wall. There the hostess came up to me and said :

“Prince —— wants to be introduced to you.”

“I can’t dance with a black man,” I replied, with decision.

“Black!—he is not black, only a beautiful brown. Now don’t be silly, Laura ; I don’t think he wants to dance—I don’t think he can.”

“I don’t see how any one can dance with him, he’d be too scratchy,” I said ; “besides, ‘an old picture’ and an Indian idol can’t dance.”

Several people, hearing this, tittered. Mrs. W—— looked vexed and murmured :

“Now do be a good girl ; some people would be flattered at being noticed by an Indian prince.”

“He is like an Indian god,” said I, taking a peep

at him, and then I drew back, for the Prince, who had been coming nearer and nearer, suddenly stood before me and bowed profoundly, while his attendant and interpreter looked on—I thought there was a twinkle in his eye.

They were dancing the lancers, and I believe “old Koh-i-noor” would have liked to join, but I shook my head vigorously when he put out his hand and said “dance”; he waved his attendant imperiously away. We sat side by side, and I at least felt very uncomfortable; for though his attendant had retired to some distance, he seemed to me to regard us both with a satirical smile, as though there were some joke, though I could see none. All the Prince said was an indescribable word, which some one told me afterwards meant “very fair,” and alluded to my complexion and hair, but it was quite lost on me; yet I felt his attentions decidedly embarrassing. But, though I did not realise it at the time, I have no doubt now that I brought them upon myself. When I first saw him standing in a recess watching the dancers, he had looked so still and wooden that I thought of the Indian figures I had seen on little round wooden stands, and I called him “an Indian ido”; then my fondness for fairy tales and my vivid imagination carried me on. I looked at him again and again—for was he not the Sultan to whom Sheherazade related the stories in *The Arabian Nights Entertainments*? or he might be “The King of the Black Isles,” or the

caliph Haroun Alraschid, and in that case he must have been personally acquainted with Sinbad the Sailor. It was no uncommon thing for my partners to find me rather preoccupied, and to ask me what I was thinking of, and sometimes my replies created considerable astonishment and amusement. I remember in this instance a Mr. Jellicoe, whom I knew very well, was my partner, and he was highly amused and suggested other characters, and each time I have no doubt I looked critically at the two Indians. But I shall never forget my dismay, not to say horror, at finding "old Koh-i-Noor" at my side. If he had been any one of the characters I had imagined him, I could not have been more alarmed.

It was not his title, for very young people are not abashed at titled people—besides, I was accustomed to see Prince Ghica (Prince of Samos) at our house frequently, as his son was a ward of my father's, and was at that party with us ; nor was it the Indian's dark colour, for he was not so dark-skinned as Prince Ghica ; it was, I think, his gorgeous dress and my own imagination in thinking he had stepped out of *The Arabian Nights*. I could not answer the few words of broken English he managed to utter, and it was not till, the dance being over, two persons passed us and the gentleman said to his partner, "Oh, look at those two—there's a picture of Beauty and the Beast !" that I looked up startled and horrified into the Prince's face. He did not understand what was said,

he only smiled seraphically upon me, and clasping my hand, pressed it to his golden and bejewelled breast ; and I, like the heroine of a novel, tore it out of his clasp, and jumping out of my seat, the door being close by, slipped out of the room.

Once outside, I quickly threaded my way through the flirting groups and sped up the shallow stairs as though I were pursued ; halfway I stopped and thumped upon a door, calling " Dick ! Dick !" but as there was no answer I flew on, to the top of the house and into Miss W——s bedroom, and crept up to the bed. The blinds were up and the moonlight streamed into the room, and there lay my little friend, fast asleep, all her thick, fair hair covering the pillow, as I had so often seen it when I had awakened in the night at school. I sat down by the bed and lay my head on the pillow, and almost wished we were both back at Watford, far away from Indian princes and all such gorgeous personages.

I suppose I fell asleep, but not for long. A chiming clock startled me ; I sat up ; I could hear the faint strains of the Blue Danube Waltz floating up to me, and I was conscious of being very hungry. I rose, and, passing the dressing-table, caught sight of myself in the glass, and was quite afraid of my own reflection. I did look like an old picture, like one of the women of Queen Anne's day. My hair, done high over a cushion, fell in curls over my shoulders, and the moonlight catching it had almost the effect of powder.

I looked round the panelled room, and again at the old-fashioned girl ; then I turned my back abruptly on her, for I had a curious feeling that I had stood there before and had seen that girl before, that the years had slipped back, and it was the days of Queen Anne I was living in, that on joining the dancers I should find them all in powder and patches, dancing a minuet. So strong was the feeling that as I went downstairs I was still under the impression that I was some one who had lived in the eighteenth century, and should not have been surprised to find my partner waiting for me in silk stockings, satin clothes, and a wig.

To bring myself back to the present I stopped on the landing, and, leaning my arms on the hand-rail, looked over into the hall ; the first glance of the dancers in their modern dress would recall me, I thought. But instead of seeing the dancers of Queen Anne's time, or the present, I fancied I saw two men carrying a body in its grave-clothes, while a tall old man in a dressing-gown stood holding a flaring tallow candle, which guttered in the draught. I felt the cold air and shivered. I also fancied I heard the panel slide back, but I could not see the hole in the wall from where I stood ; but I saw the rough men return up the stone steps, wiping their faces, and the doctor move to show them out, his slippers flapping on the stone pavement of the hall, as he held the light high above his head.

This vision was so vivid I could have declared it was real, but some such scene had been no doubt described to me by the Philosopher, who was nothing if not realistic. A chiming clock which played a tune began to perform ; it stood on a bracket behind me. I could not endure it. I recovered myself with a shake and fled downstairs to the basement, where I ran against Mr. W——, who caught hold of me and said :

“Hullo ! what’s the matter ?—what mischief have you been up to ?”

“Only sitting by an Indian idol,” I said.

“Did he want to eat her, then ?” he laughed.

“Where are Dick and Dimitry ?” I asked, with dignity.

“Oh, those boys ! *they’ll* catch it—they are all out there, making themselves like sweeps, I’ll be bound.”

I of course wished to go into the workshops too, but Mr. W—— would not hear of it, and took me into the supper-room, where he left me in charge of three waiters, whom I very much amused by declining raised pie and fowls, and ordering “cold beef and a glass of port.” Mr. W—— had whispered before he left me, “Now, have a good supper, and don’t be alarmed ; the Indian idol won’t come down here, he won’t eat anything—idols never do, you know—and I shall be back in a minute when I’ve sent him home to bed.”

The next time I saw an Indian Grandee was some years afterwards at Miss Kortright’s, in Kensington

Palace Gardens. I went with my father and mother to a large At Home, and met, amongst other celebrities, Robert Browning and his son, Robert Barrett Browning. I thought Browning so very like the photographs of Longfellow that the portrait of one man would have done for the other ; I should have been in doubt as to whether it was not Longfellow I had seen, but that I do not think Longfellow was in London, and, moreover, my mother tells me it was Browning.

There was a very great crush ; we were a long time getting upstairs, and could scarcely move in the rooms. Mr. Wills, the author of the play *Charles I.*, which Irving made so popular, was kind enough to look after me and find me a seat ; he had procured a chair from somewhere, and brought it to me in the middle of the room, for it was impossible to struggle out of the crowd ; and if Mr. Wills had not kindly leant on the back of the chair, I think I should have been pushed over, chair and all, and trampled upon. We were surrounded by celebrities of all kinds ; Mathilde Blind was there and spoke to us, but there was little opportunity to exchange more than a word—it was a case of “Move on, move on.”

The Indian was not so gorgeously dressed as my Indian idol, but he could speak English ; and as he stood on the hearthrug in one of the drawing-rooms, everybody very kindly crowding round and staring at him, he said in very fair English :

“Mees Kortright ought to sharge seexpence—seexpence a—what you call it?—a—a head,” and he tapped his turban (which was jewelled, but nothing like that of “old Koh-i-Noor’s”), “and she would make a lot of vot you call monies.”

I did not have the pleasure of speaking to this gentleman ; I doubt if he saw me then ; he did afterwards, but it was only to scowl at me for watching him, for I was highly amused at his greediness.

I really do not remember now who he was, though I no doubt heard at the time. I know there was an Italian Countess there, whose dress was very *decolleté*, and whose voice, when she sang, was very screechy, but the Grandee admired her, and took her down to the refreshment-room. The refreshments were in the dining-room, which had originally had folding doors ; the tables were in the back room, except a small round one in a window in the front room. My mother and I were sitting on the sofa in the front room, and my father and Mr. Wills were foraging for us, when down came the Indian Grandee and the Italian Countess ; he settled her at the table, and he must have bribed a waiter heavily, for there soon appeared mayonnaise of salmon, raised pie, truffles, trifle, fruit, cakes, tarts—everything there was, in fact, and at least four bottles of champagne, besides other wine. I never saw two people eat, drink, and talk so much or so fast in all my life. I watched with “all my eyes,” as the saying is, and in spite of the Grandee’s

scowls. It was an edifying spectacle, and so several people besides myself seemed to think. My father, who always looked after us—that is, however much attention he paid to other ladies, he always saw that my mother and I were being attended to—could only get us very little to eat, and that with great difficulty. I do not think he and Mr. Wills had anything, and I am sure there were many who had no supper ; but the Grandee and the Countess went calmly on, and we left them calling for more. The sly way the Indian hid the champagne under the Countess's dress and the manner in which she aided and abetted him was very amusing. Then the furtive glance he would give round the room, and, catching my eye, scowl fiercely and yet look ashamed and uneasy, delighted me ; but the Countess was much more shameless—she did not care at all, but ate and jabbered, and evidently enjoyed herself. I tried to entice Mr. Wills and my father to face them boldly and make them share their spoils, but they would not ; and the Indian certainly had a temper, for when the waiter struck he commenced to abuse him roundly, and then it was we went and left them still asking for more.

CHAPTER IX

"THE DUCHESS"—A SERIOUS ACCIDENT—PROFESSOR MORLEY—
"A STORY FROM BOCCACCIO"—PRINCE JON GHICA—A LETTER FROM
KINGSLEY—"ALTON LOCKE" AND THOMAS COOPER—I MEET CHARLES
KINGSLEY.

MY father was fond of driving in the Park, or out into the country, so we kept a park phaeton and a mare called "the Duchess." The mare was one of a pair of ponies that had belonged to the Duchess of Wellington (daughter-in-law of the Great Duke); she was tall for a pony, but of a very pretty bright chestnut colour; her companion had died, which was the reason the Duchess sold her. The mare was used to going the usual treadmill round in the Park; she did not care to be driven through the streets, especially if they were "mean streets"; she was not alarmed at bands or crowds, but they must be well-dressed crowds; altogether she was a pony of aristocratic proclivities. As she had not enough exercise she became very skittish, and driving her was decidedly exciting, so much so that my mother seldom ventured, and I therefore became my father's companion. In the streets "the Duchess" rushed or pranced along,

seemingly anxious to run over all and sundry who came in her way; in the Park she evinced a strong desire to lead the way, and it took all my father's time to hold her in and keep her in line. She occasionally stood on her hind legs if there was a block in the street and she was kept waiting long; she obstinately refused to stand at anybody's door, but especially at a publisher's.

I shall never forget my heartsick terror as she began to trot away from Chapman & Hall's door, my father being inside the shop. Had not some one come to the rescue I am sure there would have been a fearful accident; for though, even in those early days, I knew how to drive, I had neither the strength to hold “the Duchess,” nor the skill to guide her through the London traffic. That my father would some day be killed, or at any rate injured, I felt as certain as my mother did; but I could not, like her, stay at home; I must be on the spot—my anxiety was too great when I knew he was out with “that dreadful Duchess,” as I called the mare in my own mind, for one dared not say anything against her aloud. There was nothing the matter with the pony except want of exercise; when we were in the country and she was driven out daily she was quiet enough, but in London it was very different, for my father was too busy to go out every day, or, when he did, to drive far; and though the livery stable

keeper was paid to exercise her, I do not think he did so.

My mother was so nervous that she continually tried to induce my father to sell "the Duchess," and she often sent me to spend the day with my aunt to prevent my father taking me out with him. One day when I was at my aunt's, my father called for me ; he was going to drive to Edmonton, "and would like to take me with him." As we were going over a railway bridge near King's Cross a puff of steam and a whistle from a train startled the mare and she ran away. I shall never forget the people's shrieks as we tore over the bridge. My hat and muff lay in the mud in the road, and I felt very much concerned about them. Fortunately for us, "the Duchess's" mad career was checked by a cart which, full of sacks of potatoes, was standing at the door of a warehouse. The mare swerved aside to avoid the cart, and the tailboard came in front of me like a table, but it did not strike my father ; I fell forward, hitting my face on the knobbly sacks. As the phaeton struck the cart there was a sound of shivering glass, as one of the lamps was smashed. That, and the cries of the people : "Oh, the young lady'll be killed ! The young lady'll be killed !" and the *thud ! thud !* of "the Duchess's" hoofs as she stood and kicked, while my father thrashed her, made a sufficiently exciting scene. After the first few moments of horror and indecision, two men rushed and tried

to drag me out—they succeeded, but it felt as if I were being torn asunder.

They carried me into a shed belonging to the railway, where I sat for some time in a semi-conscious state, watching a man sort tickets. It seemed to me that I had been there hours, for at times I closed my eyes, and every time I opened them there was the man still sorting tickets. At last I startled him by asking :

“Is my father dead yet?”

“Lord, no! as lively as possible,” he replied; “and you’ll be all right soon—you ain’t hurt.”

As he spoke he rose, and I watched him with great interest open a locker which ran along one side of the shed. It appeared to be a covering for gas-pipes, and a receptacle for all manner of miscellaneous things—tools, rags, cotton-waste, a coat and a waistcoat he turned out. What was he searching for? I wondered. I knew it was something for me—was he going to give me some medicine, or something to eat? If it was the latter, I hoped it would be something very nice; but how could it be out of such a place? Much to my disappointment he at last produced a small hand-glass, which he handed to me. I took it and stared in his face.

“Look in it,” he said. “See there, you ain’t got a mark on yer face.”

“Oh, it isn’t my face!” I replied bitterly and scornfully. “It’s my back and my legs—I can’t walk.”

"They ain't broke," he said ; "no, they can't be."

"I never shall be able to walk again," I said, with conviction.

He looked scared, as if he thought the accident had turned my brain ; but before he could answer my father came to the door, with the carriage rug over his arm and the whip in his hand. His face was very white and he looked very anxious, but he smiled at me, and I was unfeignedly glad to see him ; so I rose and walked towards him, but I felt as if my legs did not belong to me. However, I assured him I was not much hurt, so he put me into a cab with the carriage rug and sent me back to my aunt's, while he drove "the Duchess" down to Edmonton, where he left her—and we never saw her again, as my father sold her. As to me, I was laid up for a week and had to have the doctor, and I think I was fortunate to have got off so cheaply.

During the time my father drove me about I frequently went to see Professor Morley and his wife and children. They lived in Park Hill Road, Haverstock Hill ; the first time I visited them was on a lovely summer afternoon ; we stayed to tea, and I was much taken with the Professor and Mrs. Morley and their big children. It was very warm, and I was tired ; and as I could not run about with his boys and girls, the Professor took me into his study and gave me his waste-paper basket to look over, "to find crests and monograms," which he

heard I was collecting. I remember so well sitting on the floor near the Professor and rummaging through all the contents of the basket, while his pen went scratch-scratch-scratch, at a great rate. My mother and Mrs. Morley were walking on the lawn in the garden ; their voices, and the occasional laughter and shouting of the children floated into the room. My father had gone to fetch "the Duchess," whom he had put up on Haverstock Hill.

Every now and then the Professor would look at me with a smile, and say : " Well, little girl, have you found any ? " Or, " What a quiet little girl you are ! " The second time he said " What a quiet little girl you are," he went on to add, " I wish my girls were as quiet."

I answered : " Children ought to make a noise ; you would not like your girls to be like a person who is weak."

" No," said the Professor, looking grave and somewhat astonished.

" I *can* make a noise ; I have good lungs, every one says so ; but I am always very tired," I explained.

" Poor little woman ! " said the Professor, smiling.

" I don't like to be pitied, and I mean to get well," said I.

" That's right—that's what I call pluck," returned Mr. Morley, with a laugh and an encouraging nod, and then, finding I wanted to get up, and could not without assistance, he helped me, and I sat down

in an armchair near his desk, while his pen went on and on, and all kinds of pleasant thoughts and odd verses of poetry came into my head, as they were wont to do. I found myself repeating a verse of a poem by Robert Brough; it was called "A Story from Boccaccio"; I suppose the garden and the sunshine put it into my head, for I kept saying to myself:

Were I to try the beauties of the sky, and trees, and ocean
To depict, our travelled critics would be quickly down on me;
All I want is to convey a golden, dreamy kind of notion
Of a garden, in the sunset, by the Adriatic Sea.

Professor Morley's garden was very far from the Adriatic Sea; but that beautiful summer evening, and the "golden, dreamy kind of notion" of that garden in the sunset, has ever remained with me.

My first visit was by no means my last. The Professor was always very kind to me—he never forgot my fondness for crests and monograms, and took to saving them for me, and sending them to my father to send to me at school. Thus I have all the arms and crests of the University of Cambridge, besides those of private individuals, sent me by Professor Morley.

I have spoken of Prince Jon Ghica, who was a well-known man in Diplomatic circles, and occupied a prominent position in Roumania. He was educated in Paris, and was a fellow pupil of Alexander Golesco at the College of St. Sava. In Bucharest he figured

in the front ranks of the National Opposition, and took part in the conspiracy of Ilbralia. He was at Jassy for two years, and held the Chairs of Mathematics and Political Economy at the University. He founded *Le Progrès*, a scientific review, and was author of several pamphlets published in Paris. On his return to Bucharest he became one of the most influential leaders of the National Party. After the abdication of Prince Bibesco, Prince Ghica was sent to Constantinople as *Charge d'Affaires*; and through the instrumentality of Lord Stratford de Redcliffe, the British Ambassador at Constantinople, he was made Governor of the Principality of Samos. He was several times a Minister, and in 1866 was Minister of War in the Cartargi Cabinet. He was a determined opponent of Russia, a great admirer of all things English, a constant reader of my father's books and articles, and came over to England to see my father, and to ask him if he might place his son, Demetrius, in his care.

I can well remember the little, dark-haired, dark-skinned man; I could not speak French, nor he much English, so I was reduced to looking on when he came and talked so animatedly, and with so much gesture, to my father. "Dimitry," as we called his son, became like a third brother—or perhaps I should say like a first, as he was older than the Philosopher. He was a very pleasant, boyish boy, of the clumsy, untidy sort; he pulled my hair, and

tore my skirts by catching at them, and abused me roundly for playing the piano "so beastly badly," as he expressed it. He played very well himself, and when I became more proficient he was the first to praise me. Dimitry went to Wellington College, and my father and mother, treating him like a son, felt it their bounden duty to attend concerts and other entertainments there. It was at Wellington College that my father was presented to the King and Queen, then Prince and Princess of Wales; and it was there my father first met Canon Kingsley, who asked him to come and see him.

My father was at that time intending to add *Euphues*, one of the works of John Lilly to "The Bayard Series," and asked Kingsley to write a preface. The Canon replied in the following characteristic letter :

LYNN, *Tuesday*.

"Your letter followed me to Sandringham, or I should have answered at once. I am delighted, but not surprised, to find you and Professor Morley appreciate *Euphues*.

"I preached a bit of him at Sandringham on Sunday—a good doctrine for Royalty—'Tis virtue, gentlemen, that maketh the poor rich, the base-born noble, the deformed beautiful, the subject a sovereign!—one of the finest things in the English language. I fear Scott has done the book lasting harm; probably he never read it right. I do not feel inclined to

write a preface to it, however kind and flattering your advice that I should do so. I do not think my name would help the book ; I am sure yours would. What I should do would be to recommend and to review it, and to spread it in all ways among young men and young women over whom I have influence.

“Meanwhile, I am glad to find you are a man ; men who care for ‘the gentle life,’ without being superstitious or hysterical, are growing more and more rare. If you are again at Wellington College, and would accept hospitality at a quiet parsonage, where no footmen are kept, nor good dinners given, but people eat plain mutton and enjoy music and good talk, I shall be delighted to see you. Your photograph has not reached me, having been kept by Mrs. Kingsley, who, admiring *The Gentle Life* as much as I, longs to meet and know you.

“Thank you sincerely for the kind words in your letter. Kind words are like good wine, to a hard-worked brain and somewhat sad heart.

“Yours ever most sincerely,

“CHARLES KINGSLEY.”

My father went to Eversley and stayed a few days ; he was charmed with the people and the place. He had always had an intense admiration for Kingsley, from those early days when he used to look up to Charles Kingsley's portrait hanging on the walls of

Mr. Passmore Edwards's Institution for Working-men. Kingsley was a man after my father's own heart ; one who always had the welfare of the poor at heart, and who had said, " I assert that the business for which God sends a Christian priest into a Christian nation, is to *preach* and *practise* liberty, equality, and brotherhood, in the fullest, deepest, widest, simplest meaning of those three great words." Kingsley had also declared that the accumulation of wealth out of the needs of the poor was contrary to God's wish ; that He would cry out " Woe unto you who, to make few rich, make many poor ! Woe unto you that oust the masses from the soil their fathers possessed of old ! "

With these sentiments my father would exactly agree, for, like Kingsley, he had imbibed the opinions of that remarkable man Henry Mayhew, author of *London Labour and the London Poor*. Mayhew was a Bohemian *pur sang*, a *litterateur*, a newspaper writer, one of the originators of *Punch*, a chemist, a discoverer of the way of calcining carbon till it became pure diamond—only without the lustre which gives the diamond value—an inventor even of patent buttons, a dreamer, and a reformer. His articles, *London Labour and the London Poor*, came out in *The Morning Chronicle* ; they were a series of papers gathered from working-men themselves. The subject was of immense interest, and awakened many, besides Charles Kingsley and my father, who both started upon the business of reclaiming the poor. There were those who would

work, those who would not work, and those who could not work ; and heart and soul Kingsley and my father plunged into the matter. Kingsley had mixed much with the workers, and the result was one of the most powerful novels ever written : *Alton Locke, Tailor and Poet*.

This story, which I read when I was almost a child, is full of Christian sympathy with, and love for, the strugglers and toilers. It had a great effect upon me, and I thought myself especially fortunate in having seen and heard Thomas Cooper, the author of *The Purgatory of Suicides*, a most remarkable poem, the product of two years' imprisonment for defending the rights of the poor, and for being the mouthpiece of much of the want and discontent of the workers in the North. Alton Locke's character is said to be based upon that of Thomas Cooper, and I can well remember what a glow of satisfaction I felt when I recalled how I had walked up the Baptist Chapel at Watford and shaken hands with him.

Branded as a Chartist and Atheist, Thomas Cooper, like the great-hearted man he was, fought nobly with his religious and political doubts, and for some years after he had turned to Christianity was continually preaching and lecturing in aid of the truth. This was the man Kingsley took as the hero of his book—though in personal appearance they did not resemble each other, for Thomas Cooper was a tall, handsome man, while Alton Locke is puny, and in

the end of the story dies of consumption, while Cooper lived to a ripe old age. One of the best characters in the book is Sandy Mackaye, newspaper editor, lecturer, and Chartist spouter. Sandy has a touch of Carlyle about him, and uses pretty strong language, but not a whit too strong; it must have awakened many a large-hearted man, and the world is the better for hearing these truths. I know it made the heart of a delicate girl hot with indignation and anger that such things should be. How I pitied Alton Locke! How I should have liked to torture the sweaters! I longed to be a man, that I might do something to redress some of these wrongs; and then I remembered that *Alton Locke* had been written long ago, that the Chartist movement was over, and that I had been born at least two decades too late. The Chartist parson, soldier priest, was a chaplain to the Queen, tutor to the Prince of Wales, and a canon of Chester Cathedral. I heard him preach in a West End church—I believe it was St. James's, Piccadilly; could anything be more removed from one's ideas of the author of *Alton Locke*?

I do not remember the sermon, but I know it was well delivered, in a clear, even, flowing voice; and I should have been astonished, had not my father mentioned it to me, that Kingsley stammered—not in preaching, but in ordinary conversation. After the service we waited in the church, and Mr. Kingsley came and spoke to us. I remember we stood in the

aisle, and that the sun shone full upon Kingsley's tall, lithe form and broad shoulders, which stooped a little. I was struck with his deep-set, brilliant eyes, aquiline nose, and tightly shut lips ; I thought he looked thin and worn and not happy. The sun being in his eyes, I suppose he did not at first see me, for when my father introduced me he looked as if he had seen a ghost, and stood and held my hand as he exclaimed :

“She's—she's like—Marie Antoinette.”

I do not know what I expected the author of *Alton Locke* to say, but I was so completely taken by surprise, so keenly disappointed, that tears started to my eyes, and Kingsley saw them, though I turned quickly away to hide them.

“I am afraid I have offended your daughter,” he said.

“Oh no,” replied my father, and he went on talking, Kingsley listening, but looking every now and then at me with that same half-awed, half-admiring expression. How I wished I could be invisible, and then perhaps he would have talked like some of the heroes in his books, instead of looking at me, because he saw in me the ghost of that unfortunate Queen !

CHAPTER X

THE PLAY—THE PRINCE OF WALES'S THEATRE—MARIE WILTON—MR. MONTAGUE—S. J. RICE, AND "PROPOSALS FROM THE FAIR SEX"—BEHIND THE SCENES—CRESWICK—"TRUE TO THE CORE"—CRESWICK AS "HAMLET"—IRVING AS HAMLET—HENRY MARSTON—PHELPS—MARSTON IN DANGER OF HIS LIFE—MISS MARRIOTT.

WE were all very fond of the play, and in the days of which I am writing we used to go to the theatre three or four times a week ; that and dancing were my favourite amusements—but, alas ! dancing, except square dances, was tabooed, for Dr. Richardson, every time he saw me, said impressively :

"Mind, no violent exercise, young lady."

But there are usually compensations ; and for the lonely hours I spent in my room on my board, there were the nights at the play, where if we had a box I had always the best and most comfortable seat.

I can remember going to uproarious first nights when the house has not only been full to overflowing, but enthusiastic, for people showed more appreciation then ; their enthusiasm too was of the right sort, for no such silly scenes as occurred in the streets on the night of the relief of Mafeking would have been tolerated.

"Now if you can be quick and put a rose in your hair, Lollie, we will go to the play," my father would often say, and you may be sure I was quick. Off we went, often walking there and back. Living so near we seldom drove home, for the walk through the quiet streets we all enjoyed.

In those days, in a little street off Tottenham Court Road stood the Prince of Wales's Theatre, one of the most fashionable resorts of the time ; it was the prettiest, most charming little house imaginable, for it was under Marie Wilton's (now Lady Bancroft) management, and was all upholstered in palest blue, and there were white antimacassars over the backs of the chairs in the stalls, boxes, and dress circle. White antimacassars may not sound artistic to modern ears, but they were the fashion then, and very clean, lacy, and pretty they looked in that theatre. From one of the boxes of this house, accompanied by different members of my family, I more than once saw all Robertson's plays—*Caste*, *Society*, *Ours*, *School*. How very pretty they were, and how well acted ! *Caste* was the first I saw and was my favourite. Honey's acting of "Old Eccles," the drunken father, was inimitable ; it was a fine study of character, that in these degenerate days is seldom, if ever, seen ; for it would seem that spectacular representations and musical comedies are the only things that the weak and tired brains of the present generation can stand, so there is little or no chance for fine acting. We were all

charmed with Marie Wilton, especially in the character of "Polly Eccles," and I, like most young girls, longed to go on the stage. But "Charles D'Alroy" was the character that all my friends, young and old, were in love with. "Charles D'Alroy," or, as "Polly Eccles" called him in the play, "Charles D-Al-Roy," was then acted by a Mr. Montague, a young, good-looking man, who died early. My favourites were "Sam Gerridge" (Hare) and "Captain Hawtry" (Bancroft); I was charmed with them both, and could not make up my mind between them. I had many an argument with my girl friends, in which I tried to prove their superior attractions; but it was all of no use, Montague was the favourite—indeed, it was said in literary circles that all the ladies were in love with him, and Mr. Rice* strenuously assured me that Montague had two or three proposals a day from the fair sex. I argued that no woman ever did, or would do, such a thing; Mr. Rice smiled cynically, and I exclaimed, with more heat than politeness, "You can say so till Doomsday if you like, but I shall not believe it."

"Ask him," said Mr. Rice, "you are sure to meet him some day. Just ask him."

Not long after I did meet him at a railway station, and I thought of asking him; but though my father had a long talk with him he did not introduce him to me, so I never had the chance to put the question;

* Editor of *Once a Week*, and afterwards collaborator with Walter Besant,

but as they talked I looked well at the actor, and made up my mind that, good-looking as the young man no doubt was, a woman could not and would not do such a thing as propose or even write to him. But before I came to this conclusion I had looked so long at "Charles D-Al-Roy," as we all called him, that I am sure he took me for another victim, for he gave me a polite bow and a pleasant but pitying smile as he said "Good-bye" to my father.

The first time I went behind the scenes was at the Prince of Wales's Theatre. I went with my father one brilliant June afternoon ; he wished to see the stage manager. We had been buying strawberries, and we went on to the stage and sat on three cane chairs and ate them. While my father and the manager talked I looked round me. The curtain was up, but the house looked inexpressibly dreary in the half-twilight, with the seats covered in brown holland. A theatre in the daytime is always dark, but it was not too dark to see the dust on gas brackets, ornaments, etc. ; it wanted the gas, the band, and above all the brilliantly dressed audience, to make it a cheerful place. It was dreary in the extreme without those adjuncts, and so I thought. Then I turned my attention to the stage ; they were playing *School* at that time, and there is a most realistic and delightful wood scene in the play ; parts of this scene were lying all round me. The grass that looked so green and real, on a nearer inspection looked like

old green baize and a greenish-yellow string ; the trees and flowers were mere daubs of paint laid on in the roughest manner ; the fallen tree trunk, that was so realistic from the front of the house, was a sham. After some time my father and the manager rose, and the latter offered to show me some more stage properties ; so we wandered round, and he told some of the scene shifters to move the scenes for my benefit, to open trap-doors, and so on. When we at last emerged into the street, my father said :

“ Well, now you have had all your illusions destroyed. You will never believe in those charming scenes again, for you know how they are managed.”

“ I shall make up my mind to forget it,” said I promptly.

“ That’s wise,” replied my father ; “ always try to keep some illusions. I hope you will to the end of your life, for those who do are the happiest people.”

Mr. William Creswick, the actor, lived in Bloomsbury Square, and he and his sons were constant visitors at our house. Mr. Creswick was then, I should think, about fifty years of age, but he looked very much younger. He had a fine figure, and a good-looking face, and was still playing the *premier jeune homme*. It was in the days when Creswick and Sheppard were joint managers of the Surrey Theatre. It was there that the prize play *True to the Core*, was acted. We had a box for the first night ; it

was a very large box, running a long way back, and Mr. Creswick often put it at our disposal. The whole family used to go, my governess included. Those were gala nights, for between the acts, when the band played a set of quadrilles, we often danced them at the back of the box, Mr. James Creswick and his brother, if they were in the house, coming in to assist.

True to the Core had a very good cast. Mr. Creswick was the hero, “Martin Truegold”; Henry Marston, “Dangerfield,” a Romish priest; and Miss Pauncefort, “Marah,” a gipsy girl, and the heroine of the play. I do not remember the plot at this length of time, but I can recall the admirable acting of Miss Pauncefort, Mr. Creswick, and Marston. I saw the piece again at the Princess’s, where all the principal characters were played by the same artists, with Nellie Moore, a charming actress, as “Mabel Truegold.” The scenery was exceedingly good; it included Plymouth Hoe, the deck of *La Fa*, the ramparts of Old Plymouth, and, what I remember best of all, the black rock of Eddystone. The ship is wrecked, and the scene picturing the rocks and the sea was wonderfully done and quite thrilling. But actors often overlook small details, and I can recall all the shipwrecked people looking very spick-and-span—the ladies with their hair most elaborately done had not a hair out of place; the gentlemen had their coats off, it is true, but they were seen clinging to

the rocks in clean starched shirts! My mother remarked this, and laughingly asked Mr. Creswick how it happened that the immersion had not taken the starch out. The next time we saw *True to the Core*, the shipwrecked people looked less well-dressed and more woe-begone.

My mother, and indeed all of us, often used to point out little details that had been overlooked. I remember one in *The Bells*, which my mother told Mr. Irving on the first night, when he returned to our house to supper. People who have seen the play may remember that the first scene is a small inn, in the depths of the country, and that there is supposed to have been a deep fall of snow—in fact, it is still snowing. The innkeeper, “Matthias” (Irving), walked in, on that first night, in ordinary black boots, with no snow upon them. My mother spoke of it, and afterwards “Matthias” wore high black boots, and stood on the mat while the snow was brushed off them. Remarks were made in the papers as to Mr. Irving’s attention to the minutest details, and this was cited as an instance. It also enhanced the effect of his entrance.

The first “Hamlet” I saw was Creswick’s. The actor had found out that I had never seen the play, and promised me a box the next time he played that character. Many months elapsed, but Mr. Creswick did not forget his promise, as may be seen from the following letter ;

"8, BLOOMSBURY SQUARE,

"November 25th.

"DEAR LAURA,

"Mr. Phelps, being prevented by indisposition, does not appear as 'Richelieu' to-night, and so I have to don my sable and play 'Hamlet.' I do myself the pleasure of forwarding an order for a P.B., and shall be glad if it would be convenient to yourself and three friends to occupy it.

"Yours very sincerely,

"WM. CRESWICK."

I was delighted, and felt highly honoured, and quite grown up, at his having sent the box to me personally. I shall never forget that night. I was not familiar with the play, though I was a devoted student of Shakespeare, even in my early childhood, for at ten years old I took two huge volumes containing all his plays to school with me. I used to sit upon a small table, placed underneath some bookshelves in the schoolroom at Watford, and, cross-legged like a Turk, head bowed, get it under the bookshelves, pore over *The Tempest*, *As You Like It*, and *Much Ado About Nothing*. *Hamlet* I never attempted, possibly because I had had to learn the soliloquy, an impossible task for a child to render properly. But living amongst literary people I could not be quite ignorant of the play; yet I was so enthralled, surprised, and horrified at the end of it that I exclaimed aloud :

“Why, they are all killed!—I did not know that. Oh, I am sorry!”

I clasped my hands in an agony, and my voice rang out in the silent house.

“Hush! sit down!” some one said in a whisper, and I sank into my seat with a sigh as the curtain came down. I was amazed to find I had been standing up, but Mr. James Creswick told me I had been standing a long time, and that he had been on the watch to see that I did not fall out of the box.

It was many years after that I saw Irving’s “Hamlet.” I did not like it so well as Creswick’s. In the first place, Creswick, like Fechter, made the Prince of Denmark fair, and the usual idea of Danes is that they are a fair people (though I have been told that it is not the case); then Mr. Creswick, having a very good figure, looked princely, and he always walked the stage so beautifully that, as I once read in *The Saturday Review*, “he could give a lesson in dignity to princes.” * After seeing his “Hamlet,” Irving’s seemed to me nothing but a caricature; I thought he looked like a bandit in a melodrama, and that he was undignified all through the play; but it reached its climax when, in the Player scene, he leapt upon the throne and, kneeling, waved a peacock’s feather fan round his head in a wild manner.

* The play was *King John*

Phelps I saw as "Othello" and Henry Marston as "Iago." Mr. Marston acted this character with such Satanic villainy and gusto that the pit and gallery used to hoot and hiss him off the stage, to his great delight. I had known Mr. Marston from my earliest infancy, as a kind and gentle friend, who petted me and talked to me in the pleasantest of voices. My bewilderment was great when I saw him as "Iago"—his slyness, his hollow voice, and deceitful behaviour, the way in which he folded his arms and glared at the other characters, made me quite ready to join in the groans and the hisses—in fact, I could not believe that this dreadful character was my friend Mr. Marston. But the climax to my astonishment was his huge delight at the feeling of the audience against him.

"There! did you hear them, Friswell?" he would say to my father. "Don't I make them hate me?"

On the stage his voice was not unlike Mr. Irving's, but more hollow; it was exactly what it should be for the Ghost of Hamlet's father, which I have seen him play, but it was not so well adapted to other characters. I am sure "Othello" would never have trusted an "Iago" with such a voice and manner; but the unction with which Mr. Marston played the part was no doubt the cause of the pit and gallery groaning and hissing, which they did nearly the whole time he was on the stage. In a room his voice was not

peculiar, so it must have been the effect of raising it, and the acoustic qualities of the building, that caused the change.

I used to hear a great deal about Mr. Phelps from Mr. and Mrs. Wharton Simpson; they were great admirers of his, and told me how devoted his wife was to him; it was said she always helped him dress, and used to stand at the wings night after night all the years he was playing at Sadler's Wells. Though I was very young indeed at the time, I can recall him distinctly—the curious nasal tone of his voice, also a bad habit he had of clutching at his shoulder, every few minutes.

As a child I must have been to Sadler's Wells, although I cannot recall anything about it in its palmy days; but my father and mother frequently went during Mr. Phelps's management, and I believe saw all Shakespeare's plays there. I know they knew several of the principal actors. Mr. Marston told my mother that he fought a duel every night in danger of his life when he was acting the "Duke of Buckingham" in *John Saville of Haysted*, a play which had a long run. The actor George Bennett, who played "Felton" (who assassinates the Duke) was so much in earnest that Marston dared not take his eyes off him for an instant, or he would have been run through, for Bennett was transformed—he *was Felton*.

It was there that my father and mother saw

Browning's beautiful poetical play, *A Blot on the Scutcheon*. It was very finely acted, the actor who played the lover having the most beautiful and sympathetic voice. My mother says that Mr. Phelps and Miss Cooper acted so charmingly that it made an evening never to be forgotten.

All this happened when I was an infant, "crying for the light," as Tennyson puts it, or it may have been in the days of that privileged young person Toddlekins, when she was safely tucked up in bed, and fast asleep, dreaming of the games with her father, or of her friend George Cruikshank, and those wonderful tales *Cinderella* and *Hop-o'-my-Thumb*. I fancy it was then that the young couple used to go out, leaving their children in charge of the faithful Mary Ann; and one may be sure that "the world went very well then," even though the young author was unknown to fame, and had not been asked to write an address for the Clerkenwell Benevolent Fund, to be spoken by Miss Marriott, on the boards of Sadler's Wells. That happened years afterwards, and I well remember the night.

It was in November, '67. Miss Marriott was acting in *The Jealous Wife*, and was to deliver the address at the end of the piece. A private box was sent to my father; my mother and he were dining with Mr. and Mrs. George Routledge that night, but he thought some one ought to go, and therefore sent Miss W—— (my governess), the Philosopher, and me.

We arrived a little late, but before the commencement of the piece. The theatre was literally packed from floor to ceiling ; all the boxes were full except one, level with the stage ; the people were clapping for the curtain to rise, and the attendants seemed not to know what to do with us, as they had sold the box reserved for us. Not an inch of room was to be found in the dress circle, or they would have put some chairs for us—"would we mind the stage box?" Miss W—— and the Philosopher said we would not, so we were escorted down some dirty wooden stairs, till we stood amongst the scenes, and could see between the wings on to the stage. There a gentleman in gorgeous robes met us and again apologised ; we found afterwards he was "the Duke of Mantua" in the piece. A sheet of iron hung just outside the box door—we had almost to stoop under it as we went in ; the Philosopher whispered to me, "That's the thunder."

The box was too near the stage, and very small ; but we enjoyed ourselves immensely by looking on and off the stage, for no sooner had the curtain gone down than we opened the box door and listened to the dialogue without ; and we were immensely amused and yet somewhat scandalised at Miss Marriott's acting of the heart-broken wife—all tears and sweetness in front of the house—and her strong language and anger behind the scenes, where she scolded an unfortunate attendant unmercifully for not being quicker in

bringing her lace pocket-handkerchief. In the midst of the railing, and when she was stamping her foot and red in the face with anger, the call came for her to appear; she dabbed the tiny piece of lace to her eyes and was all softness and tears instantly, the redness of her face enhancing the effect, for she looked as if she had been crying for a month.

The next time she came off she scolded the prompter and argued about some word he ought to have given, he saying "I did!" she "You didn't!" at least a dozen times. This man also had to manipulate the thunder, which "occurred at the wrong time," according to Miss Marriott; but I really do not think there was much wrong, for she was a very good actress indeed, and the audience was enthusiastic, the applause being quite as loud as the thunder, and that is saying a great deal, for it was terrific—absolutely deafening. We all laughed immoderately when we came away, but we tried our best to keep a grave face in front of the stage, for fear Miss Marriott's eagle eye should see us; for *The Jealous Wife* is a pathetic piece—or so I believe, for I do not remember anything about it, as we were too much engrossed in the scenes at the back. I only remember two incidents that occurred in front. The first was rather comic and made us all laugh.

There were no stalls, the pit came up to the orchestra, and one end of our box was close to the front row of the pit. The pit in those days, besides indulging in "happles, horanges, ginger beer, and a bill of the

play," which were sold in the house, brought its own refreshments in baskets and bags, stone jars and glass bottles. They used to put the bottles, and even the jars, to their mouths—at any rate that was what happened at Sadler's Wells that night, though the more refined brought a glass without a foot, or, like *Mrs. Brown at the Play*, "a hegg-cup." I sat, as I usually did, in the best place farthest from the stage, and once when the curtain fell a man got up and held out a glass of port to me, saying :

"Take this, missie ; my wife says it'll bring some colour into your poor pale face."

I laughed and shook my head.

"Do now, it's good wine," he said ; "we mean no offence."

"I'm sure you don't," I replied.

"And you won't have it?—Then here's to your better health, and God bless your bonnie bright eyes !"

The man drank off the wine, and then the woman had some, nodding and smiling at me, and I smiled back and thanked them.

The next incident was the arrival of my father and mother and Mr. and Mrs. George Routledge in full evening dress. They were shown into the box by "the Duke of Mantua" ; and how we all laughed, "the Duke" included—there was scarcely standing room.

Miss Marriott delivered the address beautifully. There was great enthusiasm, and cries of "Author ! Author !" But my father did not appear.

CHAPTER XI

MR. J. L. TOOLE—HIS PRACTICAL JOKES—IRVING IN "DEARER THAN LIFE"—MR. W. S. GILBERT—"THE HOUSE WHERE THE PLAGUE BROKE OUT."

MR. J. L. TOOLE we were very fond of going to see. I was especially pleased at seeing him in *My Turn Next*, and *Ici on parle Français*. In both these farces he represented an irritable, worried and alarmed little man wonderfully. He was very funny, too, when he acted with Paul Bedford in *The Area Bell*. These were all short farces before a longer piece, for in those days people dined earlier and spent more time at the play. Then how charmingly he played "Uncle Dick" in *Uncle Dick's Darling*, and an old tradesman in *Dearer than Life*! I should not care to see any of these plays now, without Mr. Toole.

He and my father were very good friends. I have several letters written by him to my father, from various theatres where he was playing. One lies before me now, written from the Standard Theatre, in which he jokes my father about leaving his property behind him.

“You are evidently rehearsing *Paul Pry*, leaving your umbrella behind; before you have this, you have doubtless shed tears of joy at its restoration. Thanks for your invite for Boy, but he is away at Brighton with his mamma—if time permits before his return to school, he shall annoy you.”

“Boy” was the actor’s son, whose death when he had barely reached manhood was so sad. It was caused by an accident at cricket, while at school. I remember sitting next him and his mother, on the first night of *The Two Roses*; he was then a very good-looking child, with long, curling yellow hair.

Toole was well known for his practical jokes both on and off the stage. In *Dearer than Life*, as I have said, he acted the part of an old tradesman who has been ruined by the loss of some money which his son is supposed to have stolen. The tradesman then takes a post as porter in a warehouse. Lionel Brough acted the part of a drunken reprobate, brother to the porter, and called “Uncle Ben,” whose bad habits have brought him to the workhouse. His representation of the wretched, drunken old man was a most wonderfully lifelike piece of acting.

One fine day Toole and Brough determined to have their portraits taken, as the porter and Uncle Ben; so, dressed in their costumes—Toole in ragged, patched clothes, boots very much the worse for wear, and an old piece of sacking over his shoulders, with

GLASS WITH CARE on it, and Brough in a work-house suit, his face made up to look sodden with drink—they set out for the photographers. Passing through Grosvenor Square, on their way to Regent Street, Toole proposed that they should call at one of the large houses there. This they did, knocking a resounding double knock. A smart footman threw open the door, and gazed in supercilious amazement at them.

“Is your master at home?” asked Toole quickly.

“No, he’s not!” said the man, about to bang the door.

“Tell him that his brothers, the porter and the pauper, called; and we’ll come back later in the afternoon.”

The footman was too much astonished to do more than stare as the two old men turned away, and went slowly down the steps into the street.

Every one who has seen Toole must remember how fond he was of “gag”; rather too fond, for interpolating little sentences of his own often made the laugh come in the wrong place. For instance: on the first night of *Dearer than Life* my mother and I were in a box, while my father and several journalists sat in the stalls. Mr. Toole, in the character of the porter, said, during a pathetic soliloquy, and with a solemn shake of his head:

“Ah, I am very fortunate to get into Friswell Brothers; it’s a good firm, and they are a good sort—especially that Mr. Hain, he’s a trump.”

This caused my father and his friends to laugh, and a laugh in a theatre is infectious ; thus Toole upset the pathos of the scene—like Dickens, who, in his most pathetic scenes, usually introduces some clownish trick (I can call it nothing else) and so spoils the whole effect. Older people may not object to this kind of fun, but the young, who take life earnestly, do not like their illusions destroyed ; the play, or the story, is real to them for the time being, and to write or say something to cause a laugh is most inartistic, to say the least of it. Who does not regret that passage in *Dombey and Son*, where Captain Cuttle, in his agitation in breaking the news of his nephew's return to Florence, rubs his bald head with a piece of toast, and then puts it into his hat, thinking it is his pocket-handkerchief ? It is too ridiculous, and a blot on the whole scene.

I heard of another of Mr. Toole's jokes, which occurred at Brighton. The actor had hit upon a good idea of advertising himself, and had had a quantity of small round discs printed and gummed at the back ; these he stuck on the windows of railway carriages, cabs, omnibuses, and so on. He went down to Brighton to act, and put up at the Bedford Hotel ; and the next day, on tables, chairs, looking-glasses, curtains, anywhere and everywhere, little coloured paper discs appeared, with *Go and see Toole* printed on them.

I first saw Irving at the Queen's Theatre, in Long

Acre. He was playing with Toole in *Dearer than Life*. Toole took the principal character, while Irving played "Bob Gasset," a very common young man, who kept smoothing his very much oiled hair with his hand, and rapping his teeth with his cane. Nellie Moore, a charming actress, with beautiful fair hair, like silkworms' silk, was the heroine. It seems curious now to think of Sir Henry Irving playing such a part as "Bob Gasset," but I can remember how cleverly it was done.

We went to see the piece for a second time, for I had a friend staying with me who did not often go to a play. I remember when Bob Gasset was shot, and fell backwards through a door in a loft, my friend covered her face with her hands and said, "Oh ! it's dreadful ! I can't bear it ! I can't bear it !" —and it certainly looked a very nasty fall.

It was that night, as we were coming out, that my father introduced me to W. S. Gilbert. We were standing on the pavement near the stage door, and as he and my father talked I looked well at the author of the *Bab Ballads*. He was not, I decided, like the pictures of his "Discontented Sugar Broker," but more like a cavalry man than a writer of ballads ; and here I took to quoting to myself one of his poems :

A bachelor of *circa* two-and-thirty,

Tall, gentlemanly, but extremely plain ;

And when you're intimate, you'll call him "Bertie" ;

I decided he was about two-and-thirty, but decidedly not plain ; and then I went on quoting another *Bab Ballad* :

Roll on, thou ball, roll on,
Through pathless realms of space
Roll on,
What though I'm in a sorry case ?
What though I cannot meet my bills ?
What though I suffer toothache's ills ?
What though I swallow countless pills ?
Never you mind !
Roll on !

Mr. Gilbert looking very prosperous ; I decided he had no ills nor bills. I quoted the other verse, for these verses were amongst my favourites, and always amused me immensely, and I was no doubt on the broad grin, when Mr. Gilbert, who had gone up the steps to the stage door, turned on the top step and looked at me. Immediately I had an idea that he was not pleased at meeting us, and wondered why, and was sorry, for I had had a great desire to see and like the author of the *Bab Ballads*.

We had been waiting for "Bob Gasset," and now he came, but looking so different I could scarcely believe he was the same man. Mr. Irving was then under thirty, had a pale, serious, intellectual face, and long, rather wavy, black hair, and was as different from his make-up as Bob Gasset as can well be imagined. We all got into a cab and drove home, Irving coming in to supper. My father talked about the play, and said how much he liked it ; but the actor talked very little ;

he gave me the idea of being melancholy, I thought he was tired. I did not know then that silence and seeming lassitude were habitual to him ; but so it was, for, though I saw him often for four or five years, I do not think I ever saw him cheerful, let alone hilarious. His face, figure, voice, proclaimed the tragedian—and yet how well he can play comedy every one knows who has seen him as “Jingle.”

That night he quite annoyed me, for when we came into the dining-room he suddenly put up his eyeglasses, and, after a careful scrutiny of my face, said, more to himself than to my father and mother :

“Very pretty—extraordinary likeness to Marie Antoinette.”

I became crimson ; but Irving was not in the least perturbed. I might have been a picture, from the cool way in which he looked at me, and I have never been able to determine whether he knew he spoke aloud.

The next time I saw him off the stage was one Sunday morning in Drury Lane. The Philosopher was at King's College at that time, and on Sunday used to attend the service at the college chapel. The rest of the family went to St. George's, Bloomsbury, where we had a pew, or to Bloomsbury Chapel, where the Rev. J. M. Bellew officiated ; we all admired Mr. Bellew's delivery, but I was very willing to go now and then to King's College Chapel with my brother, who, when he was in a particularly amiable frame of mind, did not object to taking me.

Our way was down Drury Lane and Long Acre, into the Strand. Drury Lane, though a busy and lively place on any day in the week, was on a Sunday morning a quiet, almost deserted street. Between ten and eleven o'clock the hard-working inhabitants are sound asleep, or only just becoming conscious that they are still inhabitants of this wicked world, and that they have a terrible headache from the orgie that they attended the night before. Except for a few dogs and cats, or a half-sleepy man or woman standing at a window or door, the Philosopher and I generally had the street to ourselves, and when we came to the middle of the lane the Philosopher invariably said :

“Now just you keep your eyes open : I've something to show you.”

He always gave me plenty of time to open my eyes, which was unnecessary, as they were naturally observant ; but I did as I was told, and waited with what patience I could. As we neared the end of Drury Lane he stopped, and pointing up a small court said :

“There ! that's the house where the Plague broke out—you know, the Great Plague in 1664.”

Now this was very interesting when one heard it once or twice, but when it came to every time we went that way it grew not only monotonous, but irritating. I put up with it like a good sister should for a long time, but even the patience of a long-suffering sister gets exhausted, though brothers never

think it should—for in their eyes sisters are of no account, they seldom think of them at all. After about twenty times my patience was worn out—besides, I felt it was time to put a stop to the repetition, that it was not good to allow the Philosopher to be so forgetful. If he behaved like this other people would think it very odd, for he was not an old man losing his memory. I thought it over and hit upon a plan, and, though I dreaded the Philosopher's anger, I carried it out. On this particular Sunday, with my heart beating wildly, I entered Drury Lane, and when we were halfway down it I said to the Philosopher :

“Don't go off into a dream, because there is something I want to show you.”

“Go off into a dream ! What do you mean?—I never go off into dreams. But what is it you want to show me?—something silly, I know.”

“You'll see,” I said. “Don't be so impatient.”

How I hoped I should not make a mistake in the court ! But no, I soon espied the bulging old houses, and coming to a dead stop I pointed down the opening and said :

“There ! that's the house where the Plague broke out—you know, the——”

But the Philosopher let me get no farther ; he broke out scornfully and wrathfully :

“Just as if I didn't know that, you stupid ! Why, I've shown it *you many* times.”

"Yes," I retorted, "so many times that I thought now I would show it you."

"You had him there," said a quiet but unmistakable voice, and looking up I saw Irving, who, smiling, raised his hat as he passed on.

The Philosopher, after one surprised look, gave a disgusted laugh, and we walked on in silence; till I said, by way of saying something:

"Poor Mr. Irving must have hurt himself the other night when he fell through that trap. Did you see how his temple was plastered up?"

"Pooh!" said the Philosopher, "do you suppose *he* thinks anything of that? No man would—a *mere scratch*.* *Men* are not like *girls*, let me tell you."

I here remarked that Mr. Irving might have broken his neck, and that I did not like to see him do that fall. This remark gave the Philosopher an opportunity, of which he quickly availed himself, to describe to me how every arrangement is made by placing mattresses, etc., to break an actor's fall, and that it was only very occasionally that any one was hurt. I listened with due meekness, and we arrived at the church the best of friends. But the lesson was not lost, for I never heard any more of the house where the Plague broke out.

* Mr. Irving had had a very nasty fall indeed, we heard afterwards. By some oversight the mattresses had been forgotten.

CHAPTER XII

THE DEATH OF NELLIE MOORE—IRVING, AND MENDELSSOHN'S "SONGS WITHOUT WORDS"—MISGIVINGS ABOUT "THE BELLS"—THE FIRST NIGHT OF "THE BELLS."

I HAVE spoken of my friend Bessie W——, who lived in the old house in Dean Street, Soho; though we were no longer schoolfellows, we were still friends, and I used often to go and see her. Dean Street is not far from Great Russell Street, and though I seldom, if ever, went out without my governess accompanying me, I was allowed to go there by myself, and it so happened that I met Mr. Irving three times in Soho Square. I used to go to tea with Bessie between four and five o'clock, and Mr. Irving used to call at a house in the Square where Miss Nellie Moore lodged, the charming actress who played the part of one of the Roses, in *The Two Roses*, and whose hair was so fair and silky.

The first time Mr. Irving and I met we only nodded and smiled, but the next time we stopped and spoke, and I told Mr. Irving that I was going to tea with a friend, and he told me that he had been to inquire after Miss Moore, who was very ill indeed, and who was all alone in London, her

mother being with Nellie Moore's younger sister in America.

"What is the matter with her?" I asked.

"Scarlet fever," said Mr. Irving. I felt startled and worried, but made no remark. "I am afraid she won't get well," he said.

He looked exceedingly melancholy and anxious, and I felt very sympathetic, but also very uncomfortable; I wanted to say something kind and appropriate, but did not know how. I was dreadfully sorry for Nellie Moore, for I had quite fallen in love with her in *The Two Roses*. I said at last how sorry I was, and then I told him how ill a boy cousin of mine had been, and how his mother nursed him for weeks, and no one was allowed to go near my aunt or him. Irving listened patiently, and then he said, "So he got well after all?"

"Oh yes, and the doctor says he's all the better for having had the fever."

Irving smiled rather sadly.

"Let us hope Miss Moore will recover—you will remember her in your prayers"; then he paused. "It is dreadful to think she is all alone," he said, more to himself than to me.

"When will her mother come?" I asked, and he said she was on her way home, but he feared she would be too late.

It was about two days after this that we again met, but it was in the morning—I was taking a note to

Mr. W—— from my father. I can remember the exact spot where Mr. Irving and I met. I saw him as he was coming across from the house in the square, and I waited for him, standing on the edge of the curb at the corner of the little street that leads out of Oxford Street into Soho Square. He came slowly across the road, his hands full of beautiful Parma violets. I looked from him to the house—the blinds were down. My heart gave great throbs. “My prayers have not been heard” was my first thought ; then I remembered the sunny morning, and I told myself it was because of the sun the blinds were down : pretty Nellie Moore could not be dead.

“Well ?” I said, hardly able to speak.

Mr. Irving lifted his head and looked at me, then he held out the violets.

“You take them,” he said, “she will never want any more.”

I took the flowers and stood quite silent. I suppose I turned very white, for he took one of my hands and held it, stroking it with his other hand ; at last I spoke.

“Mrs. Moore ?” I asked.

“She comes to-night.”

“And she doesn’t know—oh, how dreadful ! And she was so young and pretty !”

“Don’t be so sorry, little friend : it’s not always a misfortune to die young,” said Irving, with a sad smile, and then we parted.

I went on my way, passing the house with averted head and struggling with my tears. I gave all the violets to Mrs. W——, but I never told her where they came from. I could not have taken them home—I could not have endured the sight of them; and I tried to forget poor Nellie Moore, but it was weeks before I could do so, and to this day I never go into Soho Square without thinking of her and her early death.

Living so near, Irving was often in our house, coming in and out as he liked. One day I had been practising, and was coming out of the room with unnecessary energy, when I nearly ran against the actor in the doorway. I stepped back into the room.

“So it was you playing Mendelssohn so nicely,” he said as I shook hands. “Just come back and play me No. 1.”

“I can *not*,” I began, but Irving had me by the sleeve, and I found myself at the piano, the piece before me.

“I am very fond of No. 1,” said Irving, sinking into a chair close to the piano, but rather behind me.

We were taught to do as we were told and not make a fuss, so in spite of nervous fears I began to play. I was sure it would be an ignominious failure, but I reached the double bar quite creditably; then I glanced at my companion. He was sitting

as I have often seen him on the stage, sunk down in the chair, his chin upon his breast, his feet stretched out in front of him, his arms lying along the arms of the chair, the hands limply hanging. I thought him asleep, and congratulated myself. I went on with No. 1, and became so interested I forgot Irving. When I reached the end I commenced it again, and played it all through, not forgetting to repeat the passages as marked. Then I sat a moment turning over my book. When I tried to rise I could not; my frock was fixed to the seat; I found Irving's hand was upon it. "Go on," said a solemn voice; "very well played—shows sympathy and feeling." Next I played No. 30, and was very glad when my father entered and took Irving to the study.

Long before *The Bells* was put upon the stage we heard about it, and were all most anxious for its success. On the first night (1871) my father went with Irving. He came to ask him a day or so before; and as I was coming downstairs from the second floor I saw the actor emerging from the study. Neither he nor my father saw me, but I heard the latter say:

"Of course I will come—always intended to. It's sure to be a success; don't *worrit* yourself."

"Very kind of you to say so. No, don't come down."

Irving shut the door quickly, and turned to go

down the three steps to the next landing. As he turned again I saw his face ; it was very melancholy ; then I put my head over the balusters and said :

“ Well ! so you are to act in *The Bells* ; are you not glad ? ”

“ It may not be a success,” he said, with a sigh.

“ Oh yes it will,” I replied. “ You know *you are a rattling good actor* ; my father says so. *Now* you will be a *great success*, and I shall be the first to congratulate you.”

He looked up and almost laughed.

“ Thank you ! I shall take your words as a good omen,” he replied, shaking hands between the balusters. Then he ran downstairs, still smiling. As to me, I went to the top of the long flight, and, in spite of housemaid and open door, I called out :

“ It will be a great success ; I know it will. *You see if I am not right.* ”

Irving waved his hand to me.

My father, opening his door, asked : “ Is that Mr. Irving you are shouting at ? ”

“ Yes, they have put on *The Bells*, and he doesn't seem at all glad. I can't think why, when it's just what he wanted.”

“ Ah,” said my father, “ I can understand ; people are often nervous when they attain their desire. I like him all the better,” he added to himself.

“ Oh well,” I replied, “ I told him he was a rattling good actor, and that you said so.”

"No doubt *that* cheered him," laughed my father.

On the all-important night Mrs. Irving came and accompanied my mother and father to the theatre. I and a girl cousin who was staying with us sat up till their return, which was very late. But I could not have gone to bed—I was so anxious to know how the play went off, and to see and congratulate Mr. Irving. I hoped he would be in great spirits, but, as I have said before, I never saw Mr. Irving hilarious, and do not think he could be. Directly I saw his face I felt a dreadful sense of disappointment, he was so pale and gloomy-looking; we shook hands in silence, and I introduced my cousin. I was afraid to speak. Was this play, that we had all thought so much of, that we had been looking forward to for weeks—was it a failure after all?

"We are very late—how tired you look! You should not have waited up for us," said Irving.

Before I could answer my father came in; he had been down to the cellar and had two bottles of champagne in his hands. His face was beaming, and he was brimming with enthusiasm and elation at Irving's fine acting and the success of the play.

"Begin your congratulations, Lollie," he said, "it was a grand success—quite a hit."

"I am so glad. I knew it would be," I replied as I shook the actor's hand again. Irving admitted that I was a true prophetess, and then, my mother and Mrs. Irving coming in, we sat down to supper.

My father did most of the talking ; he praised the piece and the scenery ; Mr. Irving asked his opinion of this, that, and the other ; every little detail was gone into, and my mother spoke about the snow on "Matthias's" boots, which I have mentioned in a former chapter. They all three talked animatedly, and I and my cousin were very much interested, though Mrs. Irving seemed to think we might be bored ; I fancy she was herself, for she was very quiet.

My father made a short speech, and we drank further success and a long run to *The Bells* ; my father, in his enthusiastic way, said we must drink the toast standing, which we did, and I rather think it was drunk with honours, but this I do not remember ; but I can very clearly recall Mr. and Mrs. Irving's faces. She laughed, and rather deprecated "the fuss," as she called it ; it struck me that she thought it all nonsense, and that my father's enthusiasm was ridiculous ; but Irving's face was a study, he looked so very affectionately at his host, as if he admired and loved him—and I have seen that same expression on the faces of several men when they have been in my father's company.

After supper Mrs. Irving said it was late, and they must go, but her husband looked at her and said, "Oh, not yet, my dear," and my father declared it was a special occasion, and they must have a cigar. With charming insistence he induced Mrs. Irving to take a comfortable chair. Then Irving, sitting in an

armchair, and, leaning back, looking very pleased and happy, began to talk about an actor's life. It would have been very interesting to hear his ideas, his hopes, and ambitions ; but as it was between one and two in the morning my cousin and I quietly rose and went to bed.

CHAPTER XIII

THE REV. J. M. BELLEW—REFLECTIONS ON THE CHURCH—BELLEW AND THE FURNITURE—BELLEW AS A PUBLIC READER—A READING OF "ROMEO AND JULIET"—BELLEW LEAVES THE CHURCH.

I MENTIONED in a former chapter our attending Bedford Chapel, where the Rev. J. M. Bellew was then preaching. The chapel has no parish attached to it, and we had sittings in St. George's, Bloomsbury; but we were all very fond of going to hear Mr. Bellew, his sermons were good and his delivery very fine indeed.

From almost my earliest years I had been used to hearing him, for he was at one time at St. Mark's, Hamilton Terrace, where Canon Duckworth, another of my father's friends, has been for many years. I used to stay with an uncle in Maida Vale, and was taken by a cousin, who was a member of Mr. Bellew's church, to hear the famous preacher, and a great impression he made upon me.

It was some years after, when he was at the height of his popularity, that he became incumbent of Bedford Chapel, and there the rank and fashion of the London season used to come to hear him, and were often turned away from the doors for lack of room. Those

who can recall the service will remember that it was not ritualistic. There were no flowers, there was no incense, but the service was conducted with reverence and in order. The singing was very good, though one would have liked a surpliced choir, but to dress the choir in surplices was not so general then as now. What was most excellent was the good reading and preaching, which was as lacking in those days in our churches as it is in these. I think the indifferent way many of our clergy read and speak is a scandal to the Church of England. I know that in some of the churches they are now intoning the service—it is thought in order to hide their indifferent elocution ; but though intoning is but a makeshift, and is generally very indifferently, not to say badly, done, we have still the sermon, and that cannot be intoned—though some do their best by adopting a sing-song style, while others whisper and then shout. Each of these styles is very difficult to follow ; and when it is, as one so often hears, accompanied by a Scotch, Irish, or provincial dialect, and grotesque actions, it is too much to expect a congregation to endure—and who can wonder that the church empties ? Sermons too should be better, and come more closely home to mankind's business and family troubles, instead of being mere rhapsodies, or strings of quotations, without a beginning, middle, or end that one can apply ; but there is a slight improvement in this respect, for some preachers do meet the questions of

the day more now than they used. What they want is to learn elocution, so as to speak and read clearly and with eloquence, instead of gabbling, mumbling, shouting, whispering, or reading in an apathetic manner, which is the fashion of the majority.

The loss of the power of the pulpit is shown in the spread of ritualism and of infidelity. If our clergy had preached as Baxter wrote of his own preaching :

I preach as ne'er to preach again,
A dying man to dying men,

there would not be so many of either the clergy or the laity who have gone in for chasubles, birettas, crucifers, processions, genuflexions, elevations of the bread and wine, and the slurring of God's Word by intoning it.

Could any one imagine Wesley, Melville, Bunyan, or Spurgeon, or any other born orator, resorting to different coloured dresses—dark colours on the fast days and rose colour on feast days? Can any one imagine St. Peter or St. Paul sitting still and allowing "son Timothy" to figure with his back to an audience, before the altar, kneeling, rising, bowing, and kissing portions of his dress, while his acolytes collect money in scarlet bags? There is not one student—I mean honest, historical student—of the Gospels and Epistles who could suppose such a thing possible. People may well ask, What are our Bishops about, to allow it? Why does not the Church of England treat its

clergy better? Why are there so many livings below £200 a year? Surely a servant of the Church is worthy of his hire, and should at least be secured from penury, or adding to his income by novel-writing, public reading, etc., which many are absolutely obliged to turn to—and that brings me back to the subject of this sketch.

I do not mean to insinuate that Mr. Bellew was obliged to become a public speaker, though he always said he was. Being eloquent, he was naturally ambitious, and most of the clergy are badly paid. I do not know anything of Mr. Bellew's private life, nor whether the Church treated him well or ill. St. Mark's, one would think, must be a good living; but Bedford Chapel had no parish—it seemed to be only a favourite church for popular preachers; there was no position attached to it. Later, Christopherson, and many others whose names I have forgotten, preached there; but though many preached better sermons, no one performed the service so impressively as Mr. Bellew. He neither shouted nor intoned, but he made every word tell. He read the lessons most beautifully, as they should be read, but as one very, very seldom hears them. His delivery of the Commandments was so forcible, his manner so grandly impressive, that those who heard him once could never forget it. He was a very handsome man, and looked most imposing in his surplice, which was always neat and untumbled and put on with the

greatest exactness, as it should be ; his abundant white hair added picturesqueness to his appearance, especially as he had dark eyes and well-defined eyebrows.

I had never seen a French *abbé*, but I thought he must be like one in his defiant, gallant way ; he also made me think of "Yorick." A fine engraving of "Yorick" and the grisette used to hang in my bedroom ; and though I had not then read Sterne, I thought "Yorick" not unlike Mr. Bellew ; the reason may have been that "Yorick's" white wig was not unlike Mr. Bellew's hair, and I had heard my father say that Mr. Bellew wore knee breeches and silk stockings under his surplice. But in later years when I read *The Sentimental Journey* I still thought there was some likeness between the great Sterne and his countryman, if only in their disregard of conventionalities and their love of an easy life. Their Irish birth no doubt caused them to be unconventional ; they certainly had the courage of their opinions, and were not like the common run of humanity, and in consequence they were both well criticised.

Much has been written against Sterne and spoken against Bellew, but there is no doubt that we have had, and have still, many worse men in the Church than either, and few more clever in their different ways. Sterne was a genius, and Bellew one of the most eloquent men that ever lived. After all, the most heinous fault of the latter seems to have been that

“ he was seen in a theatre at twelve o’clock on Saturday night, and administering the sacrament on the following Sunday morning.” I do not know how often this occurred, but if it happened *once*, people would have talked as if it were of weekly occurrence. It was not seemly in a clergyman, but it was not a crime, and he was at his post and doing his duty next day. In these days it would not have been made so much of ; for after all the theatre is the child of the Church, and should be as great a power for good if properly conducted. It seems a great pity that the Pulpit, the Stage, and the Press do not act in more accord.

Bellew’s other fault, people said, was vanity. But does there live a man who is not vain ? Mr. Bellew had more excuse than most, for he was handsome, and he was very eloquent ; besides, a number of women ran after him, and that always turns a man’s head. But he was not so vain of his own sermons that he could not deliver other people’s, and in this one wishes others would copy him. He gave a long course of Jeremy Taylor, and at my father’s suggestion chose “ The Marriage Ring.” The sermons were most beautifully delivered and very popular.

If Mr. Bellew looked well in the pulpit, he did not look so well walking, or in a room ; for the surplice hid the stoutness of his body and the shortness of his legs, which gave him an unwieldy appearance, which I am sure he knew and was not proud of. He was, I think, sensitive on the point, and it was this

sensitiveness I hurt, quite unintentionally. He came into the drawing-room in Great Russell Street one day, and was about to sit down in a very delicate bentwood chair, when I, dragging forward a substantial armchair, a perfect throne, said :

“Won’t you take this, Mr. Bellew ?”

“No thank you, the one I have will do,” he said.

“But I am sure you will like this chair better ; that is so very fragile,” I persisted.

“I am not an elephant, my dear girl,” he retorted in an offended tone, and added, “Are you afraid I shall break the furniture ?”

Then down he sat, the chair giving an ominous crack. I returned to my seat, feeling snubbed. On my father’s entrance Bellew turned round quickly, and *crack* went the chair.

“Hallo !” said my father, “something seems to be giving way here.”

“I believe it *is* breaking after all,” replied the clergyman, and on examination he proved to be right. I almost said “I told you so,” but fortunately I remembered my manners in time.

Mr. Bellew’s public readings were very popular, and he was anxious to read one of my father’s poems ; he had, he said, been studying *Francis Spira** with that view—“but the piece *John Fairfax*, which is very dramatic, I could not read for fear of having the house about my ears worse than Vining did at

* A book of poems by my father.

the Princess's the other evening." I wondered what Mr. Vining had done to have such a catastrophe occur. Mr. Bellew then complained of the pieces he had made popular being pirated by other people, and he mentioned some well-known names of entertainers (now dead), who came and sat listening, watching his treatment, and then the pieces he had been reading were taken by them. On this account he preferred pieces that had not been published, and it was arranged that my father should write him something and let him have it in MS.

My father evidently wrote to him and gave him a choice of subjects, for Mr. Bellew writes as follows :

" Marie Antoinette *is* the subject. I think if it were written like Aytoun's *Montrose*, or Byron's *Lara*, it could be made most telling. Ugolino or Raleigh are most excellent ; but they could not touch the Queen. There is so much pathos, tragedy, and thrilling incident in her story : her watching through the chink for the Dauphin ; her looking up to the window for the priest's blessing at the appointed spot as she went to execution ; her hair changing to white in one night. What a field there is for a poet's pen ! "

My father took a much more simple subject than Marie Antoinette. At this very time he read in the papers an account of a platelayer on

The great north line, a serpent with two heads,
Each in a noisy city wrapped in smoke,

to quote the first lines of the poem ; this platelayer rushed forward to save a little child, who, seeing its father on the other side, attempted to cross in front of the train ; the child was saved, the man killed.

My father took this homely subject, thinking it sufficiently dramatic, and called his verses *A Railway Incident*. Mr. Bellew was charmed with it and read it most effectively for two or three seasons ; it was then published in *Cassell's Magazine*.

I once went with my father to hear Mr. Bellew read this poem, and we went in the interval between the first and second part of the entertainment round to his room at the back of the hall. I was very much interested and amused to find several looking-glasses in silver frames hung upon the walls at studied angles, also hair and clothes brushes with silver backs, and a beautiful hand-glass in mother-o'-pearl, and amongst other things a hare's foot.

Mr. Bellew was not there. My father raised his eyebrows and said in a low voice :

“Looks like a lady's dressing-table.”

I made no reply ; I was busy trying, by tip-toeing, to get a glimpse of myself in the different glasses, for I had never seen so many placed in such positions ; but, do what I would, I could only catch glimpses of the top, back, and sides of my hair and forehead, but it illustrated to me what the glasses were for.

“I should have thought,” I said, “that Mr. Bellew would have practised at home ; what will the servants—

attendants, I mean—think of him? And oh, what is that for?”

I pointed to the hare's foot. My father frowned.

“Sit down,” he said, in quite a severe tone.

I sat down, my eyes wandering round the long slip of a room, that looked dull and almost dirty (it was somewhere in the suburbs) with its oak-papered varnished walls, and its one small, common looking-glass and jug of water which stood on the table, part of which had been covered by a superfine white embroidered cloth, on which lay the toilet paraphernalia. The smart looking-glasses that were hung on the dirty wall, and the glittering glass and silver on the table, only made the place seem more dreary. My father in his evening dress looked quite out of place, and, though I did not wear evening dress at that time, I have no doubt I looked equally incongruous. I know Mr. Bellew did.

“Glad to see you! Didn't the *Incident* go well?” he said as he came in, and standing in front of a glass ran his hands through his hair. My father agreed, and spoke of the way the people clapped.

“Oh, they always do—but I never repeat, I set my face against *encores*; the public get quite enough for their money, and if they want the *Incident* again, as they always do, they can come to the next reading.”

He sat down at the table, right opposite me, as I sat with my back against a wall; then he glanced round the room.

“ Did you ever see such a hole ? ” he said. “ Like a room at a railway station—not so good as some ; not even a decent looking-glass, so ” (with a wave of his hand) “ I have to bring all these. Oh ! these suburban halls, how well I know them ! Nothing to eat—if I had known your daughter was coming, I would have ordered some cakes or sweetmeats, but I’ve only these.”

He leant forward, and opening a silver box, like a snuff-box, held it out to me—it was full of voice jujubes. I took one, as I had been taught it was rude to refuse ; then he helped himself, shut the box, and put it in his waistcoat pocket, and taking two brushes commenced brushing his hair. My father rose to go, but Mr. Bellew would not hear of it.

“ You must have a glass of champagne with me. I don’t usually indulge in such a thing, but I ordered it especially, just to drink further success to *The Railway Incident*.

Some one bringing the wine at that moment, we all drank success ; then the audience, having grown tired of the pianist, began to get impatient—we could hear them clapping and stamping ; so we left Mr. Bellew to finish his toilet, and returned to our places.

Another time I went with my father to a reading of *Romeo and Juliet*. Mr. Bellew read the play, and a company of actors and actresses acted it in dumb-show. Every one expected it would be a fiasco, but it was a great success—the illusion was perfect. The

stage was lighted and the reader was down below in deep shadow ; the audience heard his voice, but did not notice him, and it seemed as if the actors were actually speaking ; even the women’s voices were well managed. All were, I think, astonished at the success of the venture, and it says a great deal for the reader and the actors that the illusion was so exact.

After nearly twenty years in the Church of England, Mr. Bellew became a Roman Catholic ; his mother had always belonged to that faith. Soon after his perversion my father and he met in the British Museum ; and on my father expressing sorrow at his having left the Church, Bellew said :

“It was either that, or nothing, Friswell.”

“Then you may be sure it *is* nothing,” replied my father, as he left him.

CHAPTER XIV

INTRODUCED TO CHARLES DICKENS—"LIKE LITTLE NELL"—THE FAREWELL DINNER TO DICKENS—ANTHONY TROLLOPE—LORD LYTTON—A CURIOUS SCENE—INTRODUCED TO TENNYSON.

MY father was very fond of taking me out and about with him, so that at a very early age I became acquainted with authors, publishers, and printers. On one occasion we were walking down Wellington Street, Strand, and just passing the office of *Household Words*, when a hansom cab stopped, and out stepped a gaily dressed gentleman; his bright green waistcoat, vivid scarlet tie, and pale lavender trousers would have been noticed by any one, but the size of the nosegay in his buttonhole riveted my attention, for it was a regular flower garden. My father stopped and introduced me, and I, who had only seen engravings of the Maclise portrait, and a very handsome head in my mother's photograph album, was astonished to find myself shaking hands with the great novelist, Charles Dickens. His manner was so exceedingly pleasant and kind to a young nobody like me that I was very much taken with him; and I was moreover very anxious to like the man who had

created Dick Swiveller and the Marchioness, and Little Nell and her grandfather.

When I was ill—and in those days I was very, very often laid up and confined to my bed—I used to read, or get my mother to read to me, *The Old Curiosity Shop*. My grandmother had a first edition of the book, and I read it till I almost knew it by heart. I admired Dick Swiveller very much, disliked Sampson Brass and his sister, hated Quilp, pitied the Marchioness, and adored Little Nell and her grandfather. My father told Dickens something of this, and the great novelist smiled, and said, “She is not unlike Little Nell, herself.”

I felt that this was the very greatest compliment any one could pay me, for if there was one person I wished to resemble, it was Little Nell. She was such a very good girl. I felt I could never be like her, however much I tried. The fact was I only thought of her when I was ill, and forgot my good resolutions when I was up and about; I was half a mind to confess this to Mr. Dickens, but instead I looked up and blushed with pleasure, and he smiled very kindly as he again shook hands. I turned away in a great state of elation, but my father I am sure had not appreciated the compliment, for he said one or two rather uncomplimentary things about Little Nell. I fancy he thought I should grow morbid, and he told me that when I was older and had read some of Mr. Dickens’s other novels I should no longer admire

The Old Curiosity Shop so much—"parts of it are inimitable, but Little Nell is unnatural and too sentimental," he said emphatically, "and when you are older you will see it." This was of course true; but my ardour was very much damped, and I soon ceased to wish to be like Little Nell.

The next time I saw Dickens was about a year after, at a farewell dinner given to him by many of the best-known men of the day, on the occasion of his second visit to America. I had of course no business to be present at this dinner; but Dr. Richardson had impressed upon my parents the necessity of my not being left always at home, to lie on my board and become melancholy, and possibly consumptive, and one of his prescriptions was that I was to be taken to the theatre, or to see anything where I could have a comfortable seat and no exertion. Even then if it had not happened to be my birthday I do not think I should have been taken to the Dickens Dinner, but as it was I accompanied my mother and a Miss Stevens to the ladies' gallery. I remember how very uncomfortable and small that gallery was, how the band of the Grenadier Guards nearly filled it. I had heard a great deal of Mr. Dan Godfrey from some friends who knew him, and I had wished to see him; but that night I was much too near, and wished him and his band anywhere but where it was, for the noise was deafening. The brilliance of the decorations almost dazzled our eyes,

but I found one soon became used to it, and then I amused myself trying to pick out any faces I knew. But the authors did not show in great numbers ; there were, I think, far more artists and actors.

The hall was quite new, and might have been built for the occasion. The half-moons arching the twenty mural compartments contained, in letters of gold, the names of all Dickens's novels, *Pickwick* being the one selected for the place of honour at the end of the room behind the President's chair. Below it were the initials C. D., surrounded by a wreath, and beneath that another scroll, bearing the words "All the Year Round." The English and American flags indicated the international character of the entertainment.

The band suddenly ceased, and Charles Dickens entered, accompanied by Lord Lytton, who was President ; as they passed down the room, followed by Sir Francis Grant, President of the Royal Academy, Sir Charles Russell, Lord Houghton, and several others, the whole room rose and broke into loud and continuous applause, which lasted till they had taken their places.

We had a very good view of Dickens, and I can see him now, standing smiling and bowing, a flush upon his face. I even fancy I can hear, in this quiet room, the echo of that wonderful applause—and yet how many, many years it is ago, and how very few of all that brilliant company there are left ! Dickens

looked very well and very much moved and gratified. As he was in evening dress, he could not indulge his taste for colour ; but my eyes flew to his button-hole—it was a camellia, surrounded by a ring of violets ; I wished some little bird had whispered to him to have chosen either one or the other.

We ladies went into a room and had a cold supper, or collation as it was called ; then we returned to the gallery in time for the speeches, and when we returned the band had gone. The toast of the evening : “ A Prosperous Voyage and Long Life to our Illustrious Guest and Countryman, Charles Dickens ! ” was drunk with all honours, and one cheer more ; and Dickens must have been more than human if he could have looked round and not been thrilled and stirred by the presence, and not only the presence, but the enthusiasm, of so many brother artists. But Dickens is very human in his writings, and was in himself, for his eyes filled and his voice trembled and shook, and I clasped my hands and was so excited, I could have cried if I had not been determined to hear and see all I could.

I cannot remember much of his speech. I think I thought it too short, which is a decidedly good fault in after-dinner speeches. My impression now is that I expected Dickens to make more allusion to the works of the authors, artists, and actors who surrounded him ; and I was a little disappointed that he only quoted Shakespeare and himself. I know

he ended his speech with : "as Tiny Tim observed, God bless us, every one."

The speeches over, the ladies retired to the drawing-room, where tea and coffee were served and the gentlemen came in. I sat with my mother and Miss Stevens on a lounge in the middle of the room, and we were soon surrounded. Wilkie Collins, Ansdell, Marcus Stone, Sir William Fergusson, Blanchard Jerrold, Matthew Arnold, Serjeant Ballantyne, Landseer, and I know not who came up. I remember a very pleasant old gentleman came, and bowing with old-fashioned politeness said :

"Can I get you anything, dear ladies?"

He addressed himself to us all, and on my mother thanking him and declining, he sat down by me and talked about the dinner and the speeches, and I was so excited I forgot to be nervous, and gave him *my* ideas, which seemed to amuse him vastly. As to the hero of the evening, he was surrounded by ladies and gentlemen and seemed to be doing nothing but shake hands. At last he came up to us with his son and stood talking a few moments.

"You are the girl," he said, "who reads *The Old Curiosity Shop*?"

I signified that I was, and he replied :

"What about Little Nell now? You've grown so much I hardly knew you," and then he smiled, shook hands, and left us.

When I sat down again the old gentleman asked

me if I was very fond of *The Old Curiosity Shop*, and I told him I was, and how much I admired Little Nell. His opinion was, I found, very much like my father's, and not at all complimentary to my heroine; but he was exceedingly complimentary to me, and when I said I wondered Mr. Dickens remembered me, he replied "he did not wonder at it at all; authors never forget those who admire their works." And then my father came up, and after some conversation with my nice old gentleman we moved away, and my father told me I had been talking so long to Mr. Anthony Trollope. I thought of what he had said about "authors never forgetting those who admire their works," and I wished I had read some of his, and could have talked of them; but I had never read a line, though you may be sure I soon remedied that, but I never met Anthony Trollope again.

My father and I went in search of Mr. Greenwood, but did not find him, though he was there. I had not forgotten my first novel, *Under a Cloud*, and I have always wished to see the author, but I've never done so to this day; though whenever I meet a Mrs. Greenwood, I always ask her if she is the wife of Mr. Greenwood the author and journalist, and she never is. I am, of course, very disappointed that she is not, and that I cannot talk of *Under a Cloud*; but I try to hide my chagrin, and I hope I do so successfully, for it is not nice to be taken for

somebody who you are not, especially when the person addressing you evidently thinks you should be that particular person.

My mother and Miss Stevens were escorted downstairs by some of our friends, and I was following with my father, but the crowd was great and we could only move very slowly ; as we stood I heard a voice say :

“Do tell me who the beautiful girl is, leaning on the arm of that aristocratic man ? ”

I turned round to see which girl, and met the keen eyes of Lord Lytton. We had his portrait, with his autograph, in our album. I always called him Mephistopheles. I had seen him lingering round our sofa, but took care not to catch his eye. He had asked the question of Mr. Frederick Locker, whom I knew well, and who smiled and nodded as he answered :

“Don’t know *them* !—that’s Hain Friswell and his daughter ; they go everywhere.”

“*That* Hain Friswell, the moralist, the man who writes against thieves’ literature !” exclaimed Lord Lytton in a very interested tone. “Why, he looks like a Duke ! You know them—*do* introduce me : she’s the——”

“Hush ! you’re the last man in London Friswell would introduce his daughter to ; he’s d——d particular, I can tell you, and she’s very young.”

“And why shouldn’t I be introduced, pray ? ”

"You know, better than I can tell you, my lord," retorted Locker significantly, and then we moved on ; but I turned my head again and saw them both watching us, Lord Lytton with a very nasty leer on his face. I was glad I did not know him—he frightened me, and I wondered if he had been doing something very wicked, from Mr. Locker's tone.

As we went slowly down the stairs, step by step, I looking about me, a curious thing happened : a door was thrown open and I saw right into a room ; it had a long table in it, and round the table was grouped a number of men, shouting and drubbing with their hands upon the table, while on the table in a chair sat a man in evening dress, flourishing a pewter pot and singing. I took it all in at a glance, for the door was clapped to instantly, but not before I said aloud :

"Oh, look, papa ! there's the actual scene in the Three Jolly Pigeons, and Tony Lumpkin is ——."

"Hush !" cried my father. "Look ! there's mamma waiting for us."

I looked down and saw my mother smiling up at us.

Afterwards I heard my father say :

"There was a regular orgie going on in one of the rooms. Laura said it was like the tavern scene in *She Stoops to Conquer*, and Tony Lumpkin was ——," and he mentioned the name I had been about to mention, which belonged to the editor of a religious magazine, and a dignitary of the Church.

About eighteen months after this I met the Poet Laureate.

It was, I remember, a beautiful summer morning, and my father and I were going a little way out of town. We were walking down the centre platform at Charing Cross Station. I was dressed in a pink cotton frock, with one flounce, just down to my ankles ; a white muslin fichu with two frills came over my shoulders, was crossed in front, went under my arms, and was tied in a big bow and ends. A large Leghorn hat finished the costume. The cotton dress and the hat were ordinary, but I think the fichu, which was called a "Marie Antoinette," was an old fashion and a fancy of my mother's. People did not dress so picturesquely then as now, and as I did my hair up over a cushion and it fell in curls all over my shoulders, I no doubt looked remarkable.

A train drew up, and out of it stepped a gentleman. My father said something which I did not catch, and going up to him stopped and shook hands. The gentleman would have been tall, but his shoulders seemed somewhat bent ; his hair was long, so was his beard ; he wore an ugly Inverness cape and a large slouch hat ; he looked like a bandit in a melodrama, and I thought him some poor actor who had come out in some of the stage properties. As he talked to my father I was conscious of his looking very often at me ; at last he said :

"So this is your daughter—you must be proud of such a daughter."

My father smiled, and replied : "I could wish her to be stronger."

"Is she delicate?" exclaimed Tennyson. "Why, when I saw you coming she reminded me of the Goddess of the Morn—she quite brightens up this dull and dreary place," and he looked with disgust round the station, which I have always liked. "She looks the incarnation of youth and health," he added.

My father smiled. "I am glad you think so," he said.

Tennyson took my hand and clasped it very warmly as he shook it. "I am sure you are proud of your father."

"Oh, I am," I replied very quickly and emphatically.

He smiled, and turning to my father, said, as he shook hands, "I envy you your daughter," then he sighed, and left us.

He seemed so sad, I felt quite sorry for him, as I watched him walk slowly up the platform he said I had so brightened. My father and I stepped into the train ; and as we seated ourselves, he asked :

"Well, what do you think of your hero who wrote *In Memoriam* and *The Idylls of the King* ?"

"Was *that* Tennyson?" I exclaimed, jumping up and looking out of the carriage window, whence I caught a glimpse of the back of the old gentleman in the slouch hat and the hideous Inverness cape.

Then I drew in my head, and, resuming my seat, said in a voice of concern, “Was he *really* Tennyson?”

“Certainly,” replied my father; “I said so as I went up to speak to him. He is a handsome man and a celebrated. People say he is not very genial, but I have always found him so, and he was very complimentary and charming to you. You ought to be proud to think he shook hands with you, but you are disappointed.”

“I am proud,” I said, “but—of course it’s my fault—but I did not think a great poet would talk like that to a girl like me.”

“Why, he paid you a great compliment,” said my father, “and better still, he meant it; he is not a man to pay compliments.”

“It wasn’t only what he said, it was his dress,” I began; and then I somehow told him the dreadful fact that I had taken the poet for a third-rate actor. I was very much shocked myself, and should not have been surprised if my father had given me a good scolding; but he only smiled, and said, half sadly:

“It is a pity, perhaps, that men of genius cannot dress more like ordinary mortals.”

CHAPTER XV

JAMES HAIN FRISWELL'S PHILANTHROPY—THE CENSOR DINNERS—
SLUMMING IN THOSE DAYS—A SAD STORY—"HAVE WE BEAT?"

I OFTEN thought our house was a kind of refuge for the unhappy and distressed, for my father would, on any and every occasion, ask to the house people of any age and class whom he thought unhappy or in distress. For instance, one night, as he was coming out of a public meeting and returning home, he found sitting on a doorstep in a quiet street a boy of about fourteen, quite wet through and crying bitterly.

Regardless of the pouring rain, and his propensity for catching cold, my father stopped and questioned him and learnt that he was a page boy, who, having displeased his mistress, had run away and now knew not where to go. My father immediately told him to come along with him, and he took him home, where my mother had his clothes dried and gave him some supper. That done, they did not know what to do next, for my father, recalling the vagaries of the "vulgar little boy" in *The Ingoldsby Legends*, was afraid to send him to bed in the spare room,

as my mother suggested, so, the night having cleared, he took him round to Mr. Williams at the Refuge in Great Queen Street. Next day he wrote to the boy's mistress and his mother: the lady kindly overlooked the boy's conduct and said she would take him back; the poor mother was so grateful she came up to thank my father. This was only one of the instances of his kindness to the poor, and his was the hand that started the Christmas Dinners to poor children.

It was in the winter of '67 that the first dinner was given. They were called "the Censor Dinners," for my father at that time was writing an article in *The Evening Star*—which perhaps I need hardly say was the evening edition of *The Morning Star*, a daily paper edited by Mr. Justin McCarthy. The feuilleton my father wrote in *The Evening Star* was called "The Censor," and in it he wrote an appeal, asking, as he said, "the whole alphabet to subscribe to this fund for doing a palpable good; for if all those whose hearts are touched by the hungry faces and pleading looks of the truly poor will only help the Censor, and add to the subscription already made, there will not be a merrier or larger party on that blessed day than that which he will gather round him."

This appeal was most promptly and generously answered, the King, then Prince of Wales, being one of the first to send a large donation; and Mr

Samuel Plimsoll, M.P., sent fifty pounds, and there were numbers of guineas, crowns, florins, and even three-penny-bits and pence, from all classes. Thus the Censor Dinners proved a great success, and were the origin of the Robin Dinners, and all the other Dinners—and they go by various names—that are given to poor children at Christmas time to this day, though, shame be it said, not a word is ever spoken in memory or praise of their founder.

I remember the first dinner well, for I went about with my father and distributed many tickets, and it was then that I first became acquainted with Mr. Justin McCarthy and his family, also Mr. Yates and Mr. Clement Scott. Mr. Ashby Sterry was an old friend, and he and Mr. McCarthy, Edmund Yates, Clement Scott, and my father undertook to receive and distribute the money.

In many quarters of London large numbers of the destitute were fed out of the fund, and then there remained a balance in hand. On Christmas Day four hundred children sat down to a dinner of roast beef and plum pudding served under the Gospel Arch, a mission hall in North London; three hundred men, women, and children had both dinner and tea in a building in Golden Lane, a thoroughfare in whose name there is a certain amount of humour of the grim and ferocious kind, seeing that even copper is an object of great curiosity to the dwellers therein; large quantities of bread, meat, potatoes,

and other substantial “compliments of the season” were sent to two hundred and fifty families in starving Millwall ; and two hundred and eight little ones dined together at the Lambeth Baths.

“The Censor” made liberal grants to clergymen and gentlemen officiating for the relief of distress—to the Rev. C. J. Whitmore for Millwall ; to Mr. Ewart for Gospel Arch ; to Mr. Orsman for Golden Lane ; to the Rev. G. M. Murphy for the New Cut ; to the Rev. Alfred White, a Roman Catholic priest, for Paddington ; and to several others. These gentlemen increased the grant by contributions raised in their own parishes. But the largest of the Censor Dinners took place at the Refuge, then in Great Queen Street, High Holborn (now in Shaftesbury Avenue), where five hundred and twenty children of both sexes were regaled on the national dish. To bring this about “the Censor” placed himself in communication with the Rev. G. W. M’Cree, known as “the bishop of St. Giles’s,” and so well known that his name needs no more than mention here : he fought the good fight against poverty, hunger, disease, and vice in one of the foulest spots in London, viz. Seven Dials.

The Refuge is a kind of poor boys’ casual ward, and was called into existence by Mr. James Greenwood’s famous account of a night in a casual ward. It houses a great number of boys and teaches them trades. It has branches in the country for them to

learn agriculture, and it has the ships *Arethusa* and *Chichester* as training ships for those who wish to be sailors.

The building in Great Queen Street was spacious ; it had large workshops, dormitories and schoolrooms, and in the last named the dinner took place. Here is an account, written at the time, which describes the scene better than I can, though I remember helping.

“Many ladies and gentlemen, subscribers to the Censor fund, came down at one to see the children eat their dinner. They found them seated at long tables, running the entire breadth of the hall, their eyes fixed devoutly on a large counter, on which smoked already two or three fine joints of beef, and in perfect readiness to begin. Before they begin, however, a word as to their appearance. We hope it will not be expected of us to say that they had all pretty blue eyes, and clean faces, and curly flaxen hair, and that they only wanted a suit of knickerbockers apiece to make them little cherubs—because such was not the case. Nor, on the other hand, were they all gaunt and ragged and black. Not a few were tolerably healthy-looking children in white pinafores, and with clean chubby hands and round cheeks ; for the poorest people naturally take care that the bairns shall be stinted last. Still there were among them examples enough of the worst school of the picturesque—of little hands that had

long lost the dimples of childhood, of little faces from which the red, and even the white, had fled, wherein the look of premature *knowingness*, anxiety, weariness—as if life had already been tried and found wanting—would have been droll if it had not been horrible. This chiefly among the girls. Among the boys there were not wanting examples of picturesque poverty—in fierce frowning faces, shaded by matted hair; in hands that in action played the devil's tattoo as a voluntary with the knife and fork, and in repose spontaneously coiled themselves up into fists.

“When the children had looked at the beef a little while they were told to prepare for grace, which was said by the Rev. William Brock. Nothing now intervened between them and their dinner but the processes of carving and distribution. These were not such simple matters as they may appear to the proprietors of small families, for upwards of five hundred children had to be served, and served several times. Professional waiters could not be thought of, for they would have wanted paying. There were not half enough attendants attached to the place, so the ladies and gentlemen present volunteered for the service.

“And then bachelors, being ordered to take their places behind the joints, were obliged to confess that they had never carved anything larger than a rasher of bacon in their lives, and were made to fetch and

carry and give place to better men. In a little time hundreds of pewter platters, well filled with beef and potatoes, were placed before the guests, and Mr. Williams, the secretary, gave the word 'Begin!'—and then—oh, the clatter that ensued! It was not five hundred feeding like one; no, that phrase may do for the decorous feasts of the Church and the Law, of fat prebendaries and well-fed Q.C.'s who have already breakfasted, and lunched, and enjoyed half a dozen interludes of biscuits and sherry throughout the day; it was five hundred feeding like five hundred, each for himself, and no pudding for the hindmost. Knives and forks rose and fell in zigzag, 'all together one after another,' like the oars of a Cockney eight. Some of the boys soon abandoned them and took to the weapons of nature; the girls, with that instinct of propriety that never deserts their sex, clung to the encumbrances of art, only trying now and then if they could get more service out of their knives by grappling them near the interdicted point. They were exceedingly well behaved, were the little girls. Woman in miniature is still woman. The harshest thing heard amongst them was a request from Sally to Jane that she would not 'scrooge' her so; whereas the boys, when the eye of the vigilant secretary was off them, now and then had furtive fights, which, however, they enjoyed without any interference with the business of the hour, by propping one another with their knees beneath the

table, while they still kept their hands employed in the work of destruction.

“But the funniest sight was not to be found amongst the children. After all, those who waited on them were best worth looking at. Critics cut up the beef, clergymen handed it round ; essayists ladled out the potatoes, fox hunters served the bread, the Universities ‘assisted to gravy,’ and the Civil Service took the empties away. The ladies, as may be expected, were everywhere quietly helpful, and made every little service appear doubly precious by their grace in doing it—only, it must be confessed, they connived at the rogueries of ingenious boys who, having secreted the contents of their platters in their pockets, meekly asked when they were going to be served.

“A mere buzz and clatter had almost become the normal state of things, when suddenly there was heard a mighty roar. Pudding was on the table ; four or five of these thirteen-inch Christmas projectiles were now lying where the bones of the beef had lain but a moment before. How, in the twinkling of an eye, these puddings fell to pieces and disappeared can hardly be imagined. The transformations of a pantomime were nothing to it : how little boys, who had hitherto born an unblemished reputation, were caught trying to look hungry long after they had made large slices of those puddings part of themselves ; how even little girls for a

moment lost their sense of the becoming, and clutched at the speckled treat—it would not be gracious to tell.

“Enough to say that new proof was afforded of the great truth that we of English stock, whatever our differences of creed, caste, temper, character, and opinion, all unite in a universal respect and affection—nay, even reverence and love—for Christmas Plum Pudding.

“When dinner was over a short grace was sung, the Rev. G. W. M'Cree leading, and then three cheers were given for ‘The Censor,’ who was introduced to the boys and made them a short speech. Mr. Plimsoll followed him, and the secretary spoke the parting word—the word evidently of a man who knew exactly how to manage children, and above all these children; they cheered him to the very echo, as indeed we fear they would have cheered a much less deserving man, so thoroughly well pleased did they seem with themselves and everything about them. After that they defiled out of the rooms in the best order, each receiving an orange at the head of the stairs. It was a cheering and yet a sad procession, for the clean, bright, golden fruit contrasted painfully with the dirty, rust-hued covering of most of the bosoms against which it was pressed. None of the bosoms in question, however, seemed to be oppressed for a moment with the feelings of such contrast; on the contrary, they were full of a joy that found expression

in songs, sung to the tune of 'We won't go Home till Morning,' in honour of their benefactors."

Mr. McCarthy said, in a charming sketch he sent me of my father, and which I published in the Memoir, "the association which I cherished most in regard to him is that of his kindness to the little children, who had nothing to offer him in return but their unskilled, spontaneous thanks."

Slumming was not a fashionable pastime then. Duchesses and other fine ladies did not go to the East End and show themselves in their most fashionable dresses, nor were there bazaars and other charitable functions, where the expenses are so great, the Public is given to understand, that the Hospital, Church, or Home receives the minimum of the money taken. In those days charity had not become a profession, nor an excuse for fashionable people to try a little shop-keeping, while they show off themselves, their dresses, and entertain their friends.

The free-and-easy way these things are done now would have shocked even the most Bohemian members of the Bohemia of that time, and my father and his friends, who objected to the Bohemia of those days, would have been aghast at the fastness of these. Nor was it thought in good taste to blazon one's good works abroad, and pander to the vanity of one class and the snobbishness of another. Certainly the cause, whatever it was, had to be made public; but there was no show, no amusement provided, as there is at

a bazaar ; a letter was written to a paper and people sent in their money.

It was so in the case of Alfred Gunn, a poor man who was struck down on Holborn Hill. It was in the winter of 1861, when garrotting was so prevalent. Mr. Gunn was a scale maker, a business which requires great delicacy and accuracy. One night he was returning home from his work, and as he walked rapidly up Holborn Hill a man and woman just on the rise of the hill made at him ; he, seeing their intention, rapidly dodged them, and tried to seize the woman. In this he would have succeeded, but the man struck at him suddenly with a sharp pen-knife, and the blade entered his left eye. He never forgot the long thin fingers and the sharp blade, but bore the dreadful recollection to his grave.

A policeman found him and took him to St. Bartholomew's Hospital. There he remained six weeks ; and after being sent out for a few days to recruit his strength, an operation was performed, and the eye taken out by Mr. Paget ; but the other eye went from sympathy, and he became totally blind, which a painful operation at Charing Cross failed to cure. When my father heard of the case and went to see Alfred Gunn, he found him and his young wife and infant child in a miserable garret ; and my father, in speaking of him, said : "A pitiable sight he was, pale, sickly, and in rags, without a coat, as he sat glaring at me with one sightless eye."

His wife, an industrious needlewoman, had just kept a roof over their heads, but they were almost starving when Mr. I——, a friend of my father's, found them. In this case an appeal was made to the public in *The Morning Star*; the King, then Prince of Wales, again sent the first donation. I was quite a child at the time, but I well remember General Knollys's letter coming, and my father's delight. The letter says (I have it by me still): "I am commanded by the Prince to send —— for the use of Alfred Gunn, whose sad case was this morning brought under the notice of his Royal Highness."

"God bless the Prince of Wales," said my father as he read the letter.

From the Prince to dustmen, who collected their beer money and sent it by a deputation—I remember the deputation coming, also some coalheavers, who wore their curious leather hats, which had large flaps resting on the backs of their necks and coming down to their shoulders,—from Members of Parliament, who sent their guineas, to workgirls who saved their pence,—upwards of £280 was collected.

The money was invested in a shop at Berkhamstead, and the Gunns began a new career which for some time was successful. Mrs. Gunn did her best, but she was not a businesslike woman, and to manage a house, a small servant—and servants of any and every size take some managing—a business and a lodger, is not an easy task; then, too, her poor husband's health

gave way and he fell into consumption, and was finally, by my father's instrumentality, admitted to the Consumption Hospital at Hampstead. The business was sold and his wife and children went to live near him. In fact, Mrs. Gunn went into the Hospital as a nurse, and was with him till he died. It is a miserable story, for they were both young and fairly prosperous people when the assault occurred.

My father still took an interest in the parish where he had spent the first years of his married life, and knowing this the different vicars of St. Philip's, Granville Square, were not backward in asking his help. It was in this way that the following story concerning a certain Mrs. Pugh, who, at the age of eighty, was living in poverty, hunger, and dirt, in a second floor back in Easton Street, Exmouth Street, came to his ears. My father did for her what he had done for Alfred Gunn—he appealed to the public, and thus her last days were not spent in the workhouse, of which she had a great dread.

Here is her story ; I make no apology for adding it, as I think she was a heroine, and deserving of a better fate than to pass her last years in such squalor.

Mrs. Pugh was a pretty little quaint old lady, the cousin of Dr. Arnold of Lincoln's Inn. From the time of the Conquest, she told us, "the Crown has never wanted an arm of the Arnolds to fight for her."

Her great-grandfather served under Marlborough ; her father under Nelson, and was captain of the

main-top to Lord Collingwood, when, after the death of Nelson, he cruised the seas to protect our merchants. On board Collingwood's ship sailed Arnold and his little daughter, who was companion to Lady Collingwood.

One day the frigate gave chase to a French ship, armed to the teeth, crowded with men, that stole out of Brest Harbour. At the roar of the cannon the little maid ran as hard as she could to hide away, but the surgeon caught her at the bottom of the "companion" (Surgeon Cole), ready for action too, and said :

"You'll do, my little maid ; sit here and pick tow for the men's wounds."

So the little girl, trembling with fright, sat under the ladder, with busy fingers picking what we call *charpi* ; and, while the battle roared above her, and the men cheered and fell, and the "companion" grew slippery with blood, every now and then the poor child peered forth to see if they were bringing down her father ; but one of the boys, who was picking tow at her side, covered her eyes with his hand once and said :

"Don't look, Fanny, don't look at *that*," and then, she supposed, some more ghastly object went by.

The little maid's father was *not* carried down, and presently the firing ceased, and there was a great cheer, and the first man who stepped down into the cockpit to see his wounded men was the great and good Lord Collingwood himself.

"Well !" said he to Surgeon Cole, with a great sigh of relief, "*thank God that's over !* "

“What !” cried the little maid, jumping up. “Have we beat ?”

“I do not know about *we*, my little girl,” said the great seaman, “but the French have given in.”

“And I do know about *we*,” said Surgeon Cole, red-handed now, alas ! “for she stuck to her place and picked tow and did her share like the rest of us.”

True to her lineage, Fanny Arnold (married to a Pugh) sent her sons to fight for her Queen, and the last, then in the 60th Regiment, died at Devonport some years before Mrs. Pugh’s circumstances were made known.

I well remember going with my father to see the gentle, little old woman—pretty still, though living in poverty, hunger, and dirt. She was in receipt of parish relief, and had only 1s. 3d. a week to live on ! The house was very dirty and dilapidated, the stairs worn into holes, the plaster dropping from the walls and ceiling. But Mrs. Pugh’s room was scrupulously clean, though very tiny ; the fender was in two pieces, the hearthrug in holes, there was no carpet, and the window principally consisted of brown paper. Mrs. Pugh was out, so my father suggested we should buy her a few things and make her room look more comfortable. We found our way downstairs again and purchased a fender and a large warm rug at a shop close by, also a thick coloured blanket for her bed ; and, accompanied by the shopman, we returned to the house, and, dismissing him at the door, we

carried up our purchases. Mrs. Pugh was still out, so we put down the new rug and fender and covered the patchwork quilt with the gay blanket. We then went down again to look for a glazier and to order some coal. When we returned our heroine was in her room. She had rolled up the rug and stuffed it under the bed with the new fender, and she had the old fender and rug back in their places, and the blanket she had hung up like a shawl behind the door. My father said nothing, but I could see he was desperately disappointed. He told her her window should be mended and cleaned, but she seemed anything but grateful; all she wanted, she said, was “a new eye” in her spectacles, as she could not read her only book, the Bible. Her husband’s and sons’ photographs hung round the mantelshelf with some funeral cards. They were very faded and poor likenesses, but these were her treasures, and she quite brightened up when she talked of those long past days when she was young, and she was very proud that “the Crown and the country had never wanted an arm of the Arnolds to fight for them.”

Our visit to her was paid before the letter appeared in the papers. I do not know how long she lived, but I think about eighteen months or two years after the letter appeared; and money enough was found to keep her in comparative comfort while living, and to bury her when she died.

CHAPTER XVI

MR. AND MRS. JUSTIN MCCARTHY—WILLIAM BARRY—MISS HERAUD—
HENRIE DRAYTON—"THE GINGERBREAD MAIDEN"—LETTERS FROM
HANS CHRISTIAN ANDERSEN.

MR. MCCARTHY was one of the many charming Irishmen we knew. He is of middle height, and had in those days auburn hair, which he wore rather long. I never saw him without spectacles, through which he used to beam kindly on all. I can well remember him at the Censor Dinner carrying round bread, or plates of meat and vegetables, or helping me to ladle out potatoes and gravy, and I can again see him standing looking down the long tables, a great look of pleasure, gratification, and kindness on his face. I always felt confidence in Mr. McCarthy; he neither treated me as if I were a small child, nor paid me compliments, but his kind and pleasant manner set me at my ease, and he was one of the men of letters I was always delighted to see; so much so that my father used to chaff me and say:

"I am sure your favourite is a Fenian; some day we shall hear of his being put in prison, then what will *you* do?"

I was rather scared at this, and I used to look at Mr. McCarthy and wonder of what he was thinking, and as he was usually very silent I wondered if he were hatching plots to blow up the Government, or one of the prisons, but I always decided that he looked a great deal too kind, and that he must be thinking of the plots of his novels—he could not otherwise look so good and happy.

But if I was charmed with Mr. McCarthy, I was equally so with his wife and children. Mrs. McCarthy was very handsome, and my idea of Marie Antoinette. She had the same clear-cut features, a most delicate skin, and beautiful grey hair—in fact, she was the image of De La Roche's Marie Antoinette. Her manners were charming and her Irish-English so very pretty. Then there were the two young people, both delightful. I can vividly recall a dramatic performance we had in our drawing-room, in which Miss McCarthy, though quite a child, played Mrs. Bouncer in *Box and Cox* in a wonderful manner—she had quite caught the spirit of the farce. Justin Huntly McCarthy and my brother Harry were respectively “Box” and “Cox.”

My father often used to take one or two of us down to the theatre and put us into a seat; he would stay sometimes himself, but he more often left, and came back and fetched us. My governess and I frequently went to the play in this way. I saw Bellmore in Dion Boucicault's play *The Flying Scud*.

It was acted at the Holborn, which is now a music hall, but was then a well-known and fashionable theatre. *The Flying Scud* had a strong caste ; Bellmore was the old jockey "Nat Gosling," Miss Bessie Foote "Kate Rideout," and Lord Woodbie "Fanny Josephs." We enjoyed the piece immensely. At the close of the performance my father came in to fetch us, and introduced me to two young Irishmen who had been sitting near us in the dress circle ; they were William Barry and his brother Michael. They were both young—the latter quite a youth, just over from Ireland for a holiday and to visit his brother.

"I'm showing Michael about the town," said William Barry. "I thought you were your father's daughter—he looked like 'the relieving officer.'"

I was not prepossessed by this address. I had heard both young men and young women call their father "the governor," but I did not know that in the slang of the time a father was dubbed "the relieving officer." I disliked slang, and I strongly objected to my father being spoken of in such terms. Mr. Barry saw that I was annoyed, and he quite made amends by saying that "it was a silly expression and he was sorry he had used it."

William Barry was at that time editor of *The London Review*, which was then the property of Mr. McCullagh Torrens, M.P., another friend of my father's, and one who not only gave liberally, but came and assisted at the Censor Dinners.

In those days there used to be a regular coterie of journalists and men of letters who met at an informal dinner at the Whitefriars Club, which was held in Radley's Hotel, an old-fashioned place which has been improved out of existence.

Most of the staff of *The Evening* and *Morning Star*, which, as I have said in a former chapter, was edited by Mr. Justin McCarthy, met at the Whitefriars. There was the well-known journalist Mr. E. D. J. Wilson, now of *The Times*, Mr. Charles Cooper, afterwards so well known on *The Scotsman*, Sir Edward Russell, now editor of *The Liverpool Post*, who has not only distinguished himself as a journalist and editor, but as an author and a debater in the House of Commons. There was Mr. Edmund Yates, who wrote a social article in *The Morning Star*, and there was my father, who wrote for *The Evening Star*, and signed himself "The Censor." Neither "The Flaneur" (Edmund Yates) nor "The Censor" (J. Hain Friswell) agreed with the Radical politics of *The Star*, but, to quote Mr. McCarthy, "each writer had his distinct province of literature and art, theatricals and town talk."

Mr. Barry's particular bent was, I fancy, natural history and sport. I know he wrote articles on these subjects for *The Daily News*, and he is the author of *Holiday Rambles*, *Moorland and Stream*, *Sporting Sketches*, etc. He was a most genial, brilliant little man, but very delicate-looking. He often came

to our house and we all grew to like him, for he was very simple and natural, having the sympathy and wit which generally characterise the Celtic temperament, and he was very kind-hearted. I remember one notable evening when he had coaxed me out of my corner, and when I was asked to play he reassured me by telling me the old story of the clergyman who was very nervous, and who used to learn his sermon by heart and declaim it in the kitchen garden to the cabbages.

"He learnt it perfectly," said Mr. Barry, "but confessed to a friend that he expected it would fizzle out of his head when he mounted the pulpit. 'Nonsense,' said his friend, 'think that you are still in the garden and that you have a congregation of cabbages.'"

The story was only just finished when my governess, who played beautifully, came towards me and told me I must play.

"Oh I can't, I can't," I said, drawing back.

"Yes, I am sure you can," said Mr. Barry; and as I knew I must, I rose from the seat to which he had beguiled me, and went up, with fear and trembling, to play a *Lieder* of Mendelssohn's. Mr. Barry came with me, and as I began falteringly he whispered :

"Cabbages—we are all cabbages."

I was so nervous that I could scarcely see, but I determined not to disgrace myself before this kind little man, so I set my teeth and played, quite

forgetting my audience, and everything but my beloved Mendelssohn.

I came back to earth rather suddenly, for a voice said, “Well done !” and looking up I saw Mr. Edward Clarke standing near with my governess, who was about to play his accompaniment for him, for he sang sentimental songs very well indeed, having a pleasant, though not powerful, voice. Mr. Barry escorted me back to our seat on the sofa.

“Now don’t deny it,” he whispered ; “I know you thought we were all cabbages.”

“I forgot everything but the music.”

“That’s right, that’s the way ; now you must never be nervous again,” returned the little man, beaming at me.

I looked round the room, then I laughed.

“They are very celebrated cabbages,” I said, “and I think it is great impudence of us to call them so.”

A very serious look came into the young Irishman’s eyes as he glanced at the company.

“Fame,” he said, “fame is worth nothing—what does your favourite Tennyson say ? ‘’Tis only noble to be good.’ That’s the crucial test ; soon we shall all be dust and ashes.”

I knew not what to say, and so looked round the room and listened to the ceaseless buzz of conversation. Parties always more or less saddened me, so I was not so much astonished at Mr. Barry ; but his serious mood soon passed off, and he drew me out on my

favourite subjects—poetry and politics. I am sure he was very much amused at my opinions, especially when I confided to him my ambition to have a Salon, like Madame de Staël, where I could gather all the learned women and men around me. He never laughed, but quite gravely, though not too gravely, asked me whether I had decided where the Salon was to be.

“I have thought of Park Lane,” I replied.

“It’s rather expensive,” he said quietly.

“Yes, I have thought of that. I want to be a singer, but my father won’t even let me join Leslie’s Choir, though I’ve been asked. My singing master teaches a number of the professionals at the Italian Church, and says I have a fine voice; he wants to train me for the Opera, but *I* want to be a ballad singer. My father says he won’t let me go ‘singing about on platforms’; he doesn’t approve of women earning their living like that, I know.”

This was my grievance, and I poured it out to this kind friend; but I was grievously disappointed in his answer, which did not come at once, for the buzz of conversation had stopped, and the beautiful tenor voice of Mr. Fielding (then tenor of St. Paul’s) rang out with:

Come, come live in my heart, live in my heart and pay no
rent,

Come, come live in my heart, live in my heart, Mavourneen.

We listened breathlessly to the end, and then under cover of the clapping Mr. Barry whispered:

“That’s the happiest life for a woman—to live in some good man’s heart.”

“And pay no rint,” I interpolated.

“Yes,” he said ; “yes, the happiest life is a private station.”

I was not quite clear what this meant.

“Don’t you intend to marry ?” he asked.

“Oh yes, I suppose so,” I replied indifferently.

“Most people do.”

Then he laughed. “What a melancholy tone !” he said.

Whilst we had talked the room had partially been cleared of furniture, and Miss Heraud gave us the sleep-walking scene in *Macbeth*, and it was so realistic that I clenched my hands to keep from crying out. The silence was perfect ; after it was over every one seemed to give a gasp of relief—it was so intensely painful.

Henrie Drayton, a very well known singer with a terrific voice, sang “Drinking.” Mr. Drayton was a fine, big man and had a very powerful bass voice, which would have penetrated through all the walls of a whole street of modern houses. He made quite a picture as he stood waving a silver cup and singing the refrain :

Drinking—Drink—ing—Dri—ink—ing !

That same evening Mr. Fielding sang “Maid of Athens,” so beautifully that I am sure no one could

forget it. At the close of the evening, as a compliment to our Irish guests, "Come Back to Erin," "The Shan-Van-Vach," and "The Wearin' o' the Green" were sung, and every one joined in chorus. As the enthusiasm grew the noise was great, so much so that my mother laughingly said she would have to shut the windows, for she was "sure the police would come in and take us up for holding a Fenian meeting."

Mr. Barry, having induced me to come out of my corner and play, did not forget his good offices, for he sent me almost every week for two or three seasons tickets for recitals and concerts, to which my governess used to take me. Amongst others, I heard Arabella Goddard, Madame Schumann, and Madeline Schiller. William Barry was always there to meet us and always sat at my side. He often asked me why I did not try to write stories, telling me he was sure I could, and saying it was better than being a public singer, but to that I would not agree.

"Some day you will bring out a book and I will review it," he said, but I used to shake my head.

However, Mr. Barry's words came true: about this time Miss W——, my governess, took to writing fairy tales and sending them to *The Quiver*. One day, when she was scolding me for my composition on some Dryasdust subject, I said in a fit of bravado that I was sure I could write a story. Having made this statement, she kept me to it, and I wrote one,

which she said was so good she would send it to *The Quiver*. It was sent anonymously, and to my delight and amazement appeared. But my pleasure was very much diminished when I found my father was quite cross about it and told me severely "that he did not want a daughter like Caddy Jellyby,* with fingers inked to the bone." At this I was inconsolable ; I was but fifteen at the time.

In about a week I received a substantial cheque for my story, and encouraged by my governess I wrote many others, which were a year or two afterwards collected and brought out as a book called *The Gingerbread Maiden*. This I

Dedicated

WITH SINCERE ADMIRATION

TO

HANS CHRISTIAN ANDERSEN

THE PRINCE OF CHILD STORY TELLERS

WHO BY HIS GENIUS

HAS GIVEN SO MUCH PLEASURE TO BOYS AND GIRLS

AND TAUGHT SO MUCH WISDOM TO

MEN AND WOMEN.

A copy was sent to Hans Andersen ; Mr. Frost, a friend of my father's, kindly promising to deliver it. A few weeks afterwards I received from Mr. Frost a letter he had had from Andersen, and which he had been good enough to translate for me. It ran :

* Caddy Jellyby, a character in Dickens's novel *Bleak House*.

"KDLIGHED. (Quietness.)

"August 20th, 1874.

"DEAR MR. FROST,

"I received your kind letter at my little country retreat, where I expect to stay some time longer. As soon as I return to town I shall go to my old chambers in Nyhain, where I shall hope to see you, to thank you for your kindness, and to receive the little book which you tell me a young English authoress has given you in London for me.

"My health is rather better, but I suffer very much from rheumatism, which I am sorry to say seems on the increase.

"One of these days I shall get *Nier & Fyern* * to read your interesting descriptions.

"Yours sincerely,

"H. C. ANDERSEN."

"The prince of child story tellers" had always been a hero of mine, so one may be sure that I was highly pleased with this letter; but it was nothing to my delight of a few weeks afterwards when I received, from Hans Andersen himself, the following letter written in English, and enclosing a large cabinet portrait of him. It is well known that he was very fond of flowers, and both the portrait and the letter are characteristic of him; in the former he is seated with a large bunch of flowers in his hand, and on the latter

* *Near and Far*, a weekly paper something like *The Saturday Review*, to which Mr. Frost was a contributor.

he had stuck a large coloured bunch of flowers like those one sees upon crackers. The letter ran as follows :

“ MUCH HONOURED MISS FRISWELL,

“After having removed to town I received, through Mr. Frost, your cordial letter and beautiful book *The Gingerbread Maiden and Other Stories*. Your sympathy towards me and your flattering dedication make me poor in words to express my thanks.

“I am, with gratitude,

“Yours respectfully,

“HANS CHRISTIAN ANDERSEN.”

In a letter which Mr. Frost some time afterwards wrote to my father, he said that Hans Andersen spoke most flatteringly of my stories, and especially liked the first, and begged for my photograph to be sent to him.

When my book came out we were living in Kent, where we had gone on account of my father's health. We had been obliged to give up our literary evenings, and unless we were staying in town we seldom went to any, for Bexley Heath was somewhat out of the world. But in spite of this I one day received a number of *Public Opinion*, in which there was a very good little notice of *The Gingerbread Maiden* ; it was sent to me by Mr. Barry, who I did not know had seen my book, and who was very ill, for the bright young Irishman's life was drawing to a close—he was a victim of that dreadful disease consumption.

CHAPTER XVII

AN "AT HOME" AT THE MCCARTHY'S—WILLIAM BLACK—MR. RICE ON
"WOMEN'S HEROES"—WILLIAM BLACK'S KINDNESS—RICHARD
WHITEING.

IN the summer of 1870 we used to go very often to Mr. and Mrs. Justin McCarthy's, who, having returned from a visit to the United States, had taken rooms close by in Bedford Place, Russell Square, and had resumed their pleasant, informal Saturday evenings. These At Homes were very like our own, but in those days every one was talking of the Franco-German War, and Ireland and its troubles, and its songs, seemed to be for the time forgotten. Sympathy ran high on the German side, and we were all taken up with German literature and the German character. Indeed, I believe that scarcely any one in all that little assembly sympathised with the French, though many pitied Napoleon, chiefly because he was so ill. I am sure all rejoiced at the way the war terminated, and would have endorsed Canon Kingsley's opinion, who in writing of the termination of the war said, "It is the triumph of Christianity and the Gentle Life."

Sympathising so thoroughly with the German cause,

Mr. McCarthy naturally had many German friends, and it was at his house I met Mathilde Blind, Mr. and Mrs. Kroeker, and others. Mrs. Kroeker was a daughter of the poet Ferdinand Freiligrath, whose works had many English admirers, Mr. McCarthy and William Black, the novelist, being amongst the foremost. Mr. Kroeker could sing a good German song. One in particular I remember called "Prinz Eugen," and we all joined in the "Wacht am Rhein," which was sung whenever there was news of the French being defeated. I did not feel so thoroughly German as some, perhaps because war seemed to me too dreadful to be a source of rejoicing. I could not forget the horrors of it. Songs of triumph seemed almost cruel, though I was by no means on the side of the French, who I believed brought most of their sufferings on themselves.

It was at one of these At Homes that I met William Black, I may say for the first and only time; for though I knew Miss Simpson, whom he afterwards married, intimately, it happened that we never saw much of each other after her marriage, though as girls we were often together. Mr. Black had at this time published two of his best novels—*Kilmeny* and *In Silk Attire*—and was even then being talked about as a novelist of great promise, but of a very modest and retiring disposition.

I remember Mr. McCarthy saying that night that, though he hoped he would come, he should not be

surprised if he did not put in an appearance. Almost as he spoke Mr. Black walked into the room followed by his friend Charles Gibbon, also said to be a rising novelist. I do not in the least remember Mr. Gibbon, but I have a vivid recollection of William Black. He was not tall, but he had a good-looking face and very bright, kindly brown eyes whose brilliance was somewhat marred by spectacles. I remember saying to myself, "What a pity he wears glasses!" I do not always think spectacles are a disfigurement, and one became so used to seeing Mr. Black in them that one cannot fancy he would have looked better without them, but when I first saw him I certainly thought them a disfigurement. It may partly have been because he was so young a man, for one naturally feels sorry to see young people wear anything that is supposed to be the prerogative of age.

Mr. Black took a seat by my side for a few moments, and I ventured to speak to him, but he seemed too nervous to look at me, and he replied in monosyllables. I was intensely conscious of Mr. Rice watching me. Rice was at that time editor and proprietor of *Once a Week*, in which he was himself running a serial novel; he was a constant visitor at our house and had come round with us to Mr. McCarthy's.

He was a much taller and bigger man than Mr. Black, and having graduated at Cambridge had by no means a modest opinion of himself. He came almost

daily to our house, and used to amuse and rather astonish me by his flippant and jocular remarks on any and every subject. He was very particular about his dress, never without a flower in his buttonhole and scent on a large white pocket-handkerchief. He talked very differently from the authors, artists, and journalists I was accustomed to see almost daily at my mother's tea-table. Their conversation generally ran on the last new book or picture, Gladstone's or Dizzy's speeches, the theatre or the Church; but Mr. Rice talked of the city, the money market, stocks and shares, "bulls" and "bears." His jokes consisted of the old stock speeches about mothers-in-law, which I have heard since *ad nauseam*, but he was very lucky then in having a listener to whom they were *quite new*. I had never read Douglas Jerrold's book, so delightful to men, entitled *Mrs. Caudle's Curtain Lectures*, which Mr. Rice was fond of quoting. His jokes I could not always see, and his catch phrases puzzled me and led me into many errors.

From the way he was watching my endeavours to talk to Mr. Black, I knew he would have something to say, and I was therefore not surprised when, Mrs. McCarthy taking Black away to introduce to some one else, Rice dropped into his seat.

"Well," he said, "what do you think of the great novelist? Is he your idea of a hero? But of course not—women always want tall, fine, black-haired men; now confess that such an one is your ideal?"

"I haven't thought anything about it," I returned.

"Oh, but your favourite heroes are bold, bad men."

This I find is a very common opinion amongst men, or used to be in those days, for I have often had the same thing said to me since. But Mr. Rice was the first who talked in this way to me, so I looked him straight in the face and prepared to show him that he was wrong in his judgment of women's heroes.

He listened with a smile and then he said, "I never saw any one like you ; you look a man straight in the face, and you talk like a well-educated Eton boy."

"I have always been taught that it is polite to look any one in the face who is speaking to me. I don't know anything about Eton boys, but I am glad I am like a well-educated one," I returned calmly, and with what dignity I could muster.

Mr. Rice laughed. "You are sharp," he said, "but I did not mean to offend ; only one does not know quite what to say—you are so much in earnest, and have none of the little tricks of other girls."

"Little tricks—what do you mean?"

Mr. Rice had the grace to blush, but I, with my eyes on him, waited calmly for his answer. It came falteringly.

"I—I only mean that other girls always look down when a man speaks to them."

"Why should they?" I asked in astonishment, and added: "But I suppose they have been taught ;

no one told me to do so—so I shall do as *I* was taught.”

Mr. Rice smiled as he gingerly peeled a peach for me, saying as he put it on my plate, “I don’t think much of this fruit ; mind it does not make you ill.”

In those days people were not always talking of their ailments, as is the custom now. The people I was accustomed to see seldom mentioned their digestions—they were all too much interested in politics, books, plays and pictures, and never fussed over their health. Now and then one came across a valetudinarian, but very seldom. But Mr. Rice was one of the new school, and was never well, or so he said ; he was always going to a doctor, or under one ; I considered him fussy, so when he went on to say, “Don’t eat that pear—I am sure it’s not ripe ; and the peach is like a turnip—it will give you indigestion,” I replied, “Don’t be alarmed—I haven’t a digestion, or rather I am told I can digest horse-shoes and tenpenny nails.” Mr. Rice laughed, and told me that in thirty years’ time I should talk differently, but his prophecy has not yet come true.

He was very persistent in his questions, and, though I thought he had done with women’s heroes, he returned to the subject.

“Now confess,” he said, “you are disappointed in the novelist.”

"I am not going to confess anything, and Mr. Black is not the only novelist here," I retorted.

"You need not mention names," said Mr. Rice, "but tell me what you think of him."

"I think he looks melancholy and unhappy, but he is a widower," I said.

"And to lose his wife makes a man unhappy, you think," said Rice, with a smile which I did not like. "Some men are glad; it gives them another chance—they soon marry again, so will your novelist."

This speech scandalised me, and I replied hotly that I did not approve of second marriages, and that I knew several people who did not. "Mr. Wharton Simpson does not, and won't allow *Enoch Arden* to be read in his house."

Mr Rice laughed aloud.

"And you believe just what people say!—that shows how young you are."

"I believe Mr. Simpson means it," I said emphatically.

"Ah! he is just the man who will marry again if he is left a widower, and I should not wonder if his daughter is a second wife—you wait and see."

A few years after, this conversation was recalled to my mind, when Miss Simpson married Mr. William Black, and a little later her father married a second time. But at the time I was sure Mr. Rice would be wrong, and I stuck to my point and quoted Mr. Simpson on the subject, for it was one he was rather

fond of, and I remembered a great argument between him, my father, and some other friends at the time that Tennyson's poem came out.

Mr. Rice tumbled all my ideals to the ground, and I was glad when Mrs. McCarthy came up and carried me off to talk to Mr. Barry, for Rice and I nearly always came to the verge of a wrangle.

Mr. Barry was, though I did not know it at the time, a great friend of William Black's, and we talked about his novels *Kilmeny* and *In Silk Attire*. The first I had not read, but Barry praised them both enthusiastically.

Decidedly the most pathetic and sympathetic touch in Sir Wemyss Reid's *Life of William Black* is in the chapter where he describes the novelist going to visit Barry at his lodgings in Brixton: "A frock-coated figure, more suited to Piccadilly on a summer afternoon than to the unfashionable suburb," and always carrying with him some gift for the dying man; "a hare dangling in dangerous proximity to the smartly cut coat, or a basin of soup or jelly, which seemed somehow or other to harmonise still less than the hare did."

Sir Wemyss Reid goes on to say that "the world never saw this side of Black's character"; still less did the men who, envious of his fame and fortune, "sneered at him as a dandy, and charged him with being absorbed in his own ends, imagine that he was earning by the work of his own pen the money

which kept his friend in comfort during the last sad days of his short life. This was the real Black, however, the Black who was never visible to writers of personal sketches in the newspapers, or the casual acquaintances who saw in him only the literary lion of the season." No man, I think, could have greater praise than this, and one can quite imagine how his dying friend would look at him with eyes full of tenderness and love. And to another friend, the Charles Gibbon I have mentioned, he was just as good; for during the severe illness of this gentleman, who had undertaken to complete a novel by a certain date, Mr. Black came to his relief, and, questioning him about the plot and the characters, "set to work and finished Gibbon's story before he put pen to paper on his own account." It is true that at this time Black was at the height of his career as the most popular novelist of the day, and was able to command his own terms from the publishers; but even under these circumstances it is not every man who would be so unselfish and generous, and it is only the man who has to earn his living by his pen who can fully appreciate the magnitude and generosity of such a service as that which he undertook for Gibbon and Barry. But Sir Wemyss Reid tells us that there were "few men who had secured a more lasting hold upon Black's affections than Barry," and this was proved by his making him the hero of that charming novel *Shandon Bells*.

Amongst the company that night was Mr. Richard Whiteing, who has since become so well known through his popular novels *The Island*, No. 5 *John Street*, and *The Yellow Van*. I had no conversation with him that evening, but I overheard him say to my mother, in a rather slow and solemn voice :

“Which would you rather be, beautiful or clever ?”

My mother’s answer was characteristic : “That requires consideration.”

Mr. Rice, who was again at my side, said, “Which would you be ?”

And I answered quickly, “Oh, clever, of course. What a silly question !”

Whereupon Mr. Rice laughed in his quizzical manner.

This was not the first time I had met Mr. Whiteing. He was known in those days among journalists and literary people as “The Costermonger,” (for he had made a name by writing articles on the poor and signing them “The Costermonger”), just as James Greenwood was known as “The Amateur Casual.” My father, who was always looking about to ask some one home, especially at Christmas time, came in one day and announced :

“I have just met ‘The Costermonger,’ and asked him to dine with us on Christmas Day.”

My mother said nothing, but I, who was rather tired of visitors, and knew my brothers were, for we liked to be by ourselves sometimes, and at Christmas especially, broke in with :

“Oh ! I am sorry.”

My father raised his eyebrows questioningly.

“We never seem to be by ourselves at Christmas ; we always seem to collect the halt, and the blind, and the lame——”

“What do you mean ?” asked my father, in a surprised tone ; “Mr. Whiteing is neither halt, blind, nor lame ; and you surely know he is not a costermonger ?”

“Oh, I know he is only a clever man pretending ; it would be more fun if he were real.”

My father tapped the fingers of one hand on the knuckles of the other ; he was half amused and half annoyed ; he said quite gently, but with emphasis :

“Mr. Whiteing *is* very clever, and quite young ; he is alone in London, and that is why I have asked him to dine with us.”

“I knew there was something the matter with him,” I grumbled ; “he is sure to be melancholy, thinking of his home and friends.”

“So you grudge him a dinner on the day when we ought to feel kind and generous to all—I am ashamed of you !”

My father did not often speak severely to me, and I accordingly felt very much ashamed of myself, especially when he continued :

“What we have to do is to make others happy ; and if you think Mr. Whiteing will be melancholy,

then do the best you can to entertain him. Now mind, I shall expect you to do so."

I wished I had not spoken, and it was with no little trepidation that I awaited the coming of Mr. Whiteing on that Christmas Day. How I hoped he would be gay and cheerful ; full of talk, and even of tricks like young Mr. Creswick ; but I did not see how he could be when he was so much amongst the poor and saw so much misery. Far from grudging him his dinner, I hoped he would eat a good one, and not blame us if we did the same ; but I feared he would be thinking too much of those who had none, to enjoy himself, or to let us enjoy ourselves. In those days I imagined philanthropists and reformers would expect one to give up everything to the poor. I think now it was rather hard on us youngsters to always have so many clever and brilliant people round us ; we always seemed to be kept at attention.

Mr. Whiteing came. I can see him now as he was in those days—a tall, dark-haired, rather melancholy-looking man, with a very white face. I can recall him sitting in a low chair, which had a very uncomfortable back, which squeezed one's shoulders together ; the chair was so low he had to stretch out his long legs, and he looked most uncomfortable. By way of making myself agreeable I had a mind to offer him another chair, but, vividly recalling the snub I had received from the Rev. J. M. Bellew only a few short

weeks before, I thought discretion the better part of valour.

I do not remember how the dinner went off, but I have no doubt successfully, for my father was a host in himself, and so full of spirits and anecdotes that I feel sure our guest enjoyed himself; at all events, it must have been less melancholy than dining alone in lodgings, or at a restaurant.

Home life was everything in an Englishman's eyes then. Restaurants were few, and not the gorgeous places they are now, nor were there half the amusements we have now; so a young man alone in London in those days would not find himself so well off for entertainment as in these. We had not become continental in our habits; Christmas was still a high festival, and Dickens had made Christmas at home an institution.

The next day but one was the Censor Dinner, and at that Mr. Whiteing again appeared, and was very much in his element, carrying round large baskets of bread, and talking to Tommy, Bobby, Sarah, and Jenny in quite a fatherly manner.

CHAPTER XVIII

SIR THOMAS AND LADY DUFFUS HARDY—IZA DUFFUS HARDY—YOUTHFUL SCULPTORS—BLOWING BUBBLES—OUT ON THE ROOF—GENERAL LOWE.

ONE of the most popular of literary women and hostesses at this time was Mrs. Duffus Hardy. No one amongst the literary and artistic circle gave or received more invitations than this lady. She used often to come to our house to consult my father about a novel he had placed for her in the hands of Messrs. Sampson Low & Co. It was, I think, her first novel, and had a very good plot, and by my father's suggestion it was called *A Casual Acquaintance*.

Lord Romilly was then Master of the Rolls Court, and Mr. Duffus Hardy, afterwards Sir Thomas Duffus Hardy, was Assistant Keeper of the Records, and one of Her Majesty's Commissioners on historical manuscripts. We had been intimate with them for some few years before Mr. Duffus Hardy was knighted, but to save confusion I shall now call them Sir Thomas and Lady Duffus Hardy.

Sir Thomas was a tall, aristocratic old gentleman, with gentle and grave manners ; he had been married

twice, and was a good many years older than his second wife. Lady Duffus Hardy was very good-looking, and rather stout ; she seemed to me the incarnation of good-nature, fun, and joviality. They lived in a pretty, secluded house near Regent's Park, and used to give charming little dinners, to which my father and mother were invited, while I often went to spend the day with their only daughter Iza, now a well-known novelist.

Miss Duffus Hardy's ambition was evidently in those days to become a sculptor. I well remember the first time I saw her—a tall, pale-faced girl, with large, beautiful brown eyes, with a serious expression that made me think of a picture I had seen of the Madonna. She was a little older than myself, and at that time very much taller, and she had on a long blue overall. As soon as the maid who had brought me left, Iza hurried me upstairs to take off my hat, when she proceeded to invest me in an overall like her own, and carried me off into the garden, which I remember was exceedingly pretty, and I thought quite like the country, as it ran down to the Regent's Canal. It had some fine old trees in it and a terrace overlooking the canal. There was also a good-sized greenhouse, which seemed to contain a great many garden tools and chairs, but few flowers. I believe it was used as a wet weather play-room for Iza. We certainly spent many happy hours in it, and made ourselves "beautiful objects," as Lady

Hardy used laughingly to say. We used to get some common or garden clay, and, to quote Artemus Ward, try our hands at "sculpting." I am bound to admit that we made a frightful mess, but after all we were only anticipating the "Kindergarten System" which was already being tried in Germany, though of course we knew nothing of that.

Our arduous labours at modelling were varied by walks in the park, accompanied by one of the servants, or to the Zoological Gardens, where we gazed at the animals we had been vainly trying to reproduce, for we had a fine ambition. Like all great geniuses, we had our moments of depression, when in our despair we solaced ourselves with a pipe—I may say many pipes. I can imagine the reader's astonishment at the thought of girls indulging in pipes in those days, when even Lordly Man was not allowed to smoke at the early age he is now; but then cigarettes were not so common. *Our* favourite pipes were long churchwardens; I am afraid to say how many the maid bought us at a time, or how much of our pocket money we spent on those luxuries. It was lucky for us that they were as cheap as they were fragile, for we often broke three or four at a sitting, and the soap we consumed in making a lather for our bubbles Lady Hardy declared would ruin her. This favourite pastime of ours came to a sudden end, and it happened in this way.

Lady Hardy was fond of sending for us to appear

in the drawing-room when she had visitors. One day, as we were in the throes of modelling, a summons came, and we, hastily washing our hands, and quite forgetting our pinafores, appeared before a distinguished visitor (I believe it was Lord Romilly himself) in clay-covered overalls and besmudged faces. The gentleman tried not to laugh, and Lady Hardy, who was very good-natured, dismissed us with a smile and the caution to "look in the glass another time." But we were both very much chagrined and ashamed, though, as Miss Hardy indignantly and sagely remarked, "Visitors are a nuisance when people are busy ; and how is any one to remember to look in a glass when she is making statues and feels in a hurry."

The next time I went to see Iza she informed me ruefully that "we must not do any modelling, as we were expected to take tea in the drawing-room." This was such an appalling announcement that I suggested our hiding. Iza was quite willing, but where to hide was the difficulty. We were not allowed out alone, and any room in the house could easily be searched, so I suggested the roof. In our house in Great Russell Street there was a flat roof, and I and my brothers were accustomed to go out there at any and every time. We used to get up in the night and mount the roof to see fires. When Day & Martin's blacking factory, which was then in Holborn, was burnt down it was a fine sight from that roof, also a fire at the British Museum, the heat of

which almost scorched us as we stood on the roof of 74, Great Russell Street. But to go up an easy staircase and step out upon some leads was a very different thing from mounting a step-ladder placed against a trap-door in the ceiling, and partly over a staircase, which was the way to the roof of Sir Thomas Hardy's house. But we accomplished it, taking with us our pipes and Sir Thomas's shaving soap, in its pretty china bowl, and some hot water which had been left for us to wash our hands.

The roof was not nearly so nice as ours, and so I told Iza ; it was a steep slope, but we managed to creep up the slates and sit on the ridge with our backs against the chimney stack. It was rather cold and windy, but—the shaving soap was Pears', and it made most excellent bubbles, nor were we discovered till long after the visitors had gone, and some one had come to take me home. The house had been searched, and one of the servants had gone into the park, when a housemaid, coming upstairs, fancied she heard voices and laughter, and, mounting the step-ladder, discovered us. I shall never forget her face as it appeared through the open trap ; her consternation and fright were extreme, nor did she know how to get us down. "Oh, Miss Iza, how could you?" she said reproachfully, but Iza invited her cheerfully to come and join us, and I assured her that "if you sat with one leg up, as if you were on horseback, it was very safe and comfortable" ; but she only implored us to come down.

The difficulty and danger were great ; getting up had not been easy, but it was as nothing to getting down. I shall never forget sliding down those slates and getting through the trap backwards. But we managed it safely—only Sir Thomas's handsome china shaving bowl, a present from his wife, was smashed in the descent ; it fell through one of the spaces in the step-ladder, down upon the stairs with a great crash, and was past mending—as we should have been had we slipped. After this adventure, bubble-blowing lost its charm for us.

At Lady Hardy's At Homes I met many notable people, but my great favourite in those days was General Lowe, one of the survivors of the celebrated Six Hundred.

I remember the first night I saw him he was sitting quite alone looking rather soberly at a group of chattering young people that I sat near. The conversation was not very edifying ; a journalist was sneering at Christianity, and some of the Pre-Raphaelite young women were posing in their usual limp and die-away manner, while Miss Hardy and I looked on with great interest, not unmixed with admiring wonder. Suddenly my father came across the room and carried me off and introduced me to General Lowe, asking him to be kind enough to tell me something about that celebrated charge, that I was so fond of reading in Tennyson. The General's face lighted up, he seemed quite pleased at the request,

and I seated myself in a low chair close to his knees and listened ; I remember saying to him that “people thought Lord Cardigan was in fault.” From what I remember, that was not his opinion ; “He only obeyed orders,” he said.

“But should he have obeyed such an order ?” I asked.

“It is a soldier’s first duty to obey,” he replied proudly.

He told me too that in the press and excitement of battle soldiers do not realise their great danger. After that night General Lowe and I were great cronies, and he often spoke of me as “my little girl,” though I was by no means little then ; and I used to please him by quoting softly to him verses of “The Light Brigade,” especially this one :

When can their glory fade?
O the wild charge they made!
All the world wondered.
Honour the charge they made,
Honour the Light Brigade,
Noble Six Hundred.

And I used to bow to him, for, as I told him, he represented all those brave men to me.

If I could only draw some of these people ! As I write I can recall even their tones of voice and their expressions, and I long to make pictures of them—but I cannot draw, even in the crudest way ; and if I could, I should never be able to reproduce the kindly, almost

tender, expression in the faces of those great men who talked to me. The flash of pleasure and kindness that used to come into General Lowe's somewhat sombre and decidedly stern countenance when he saw me, and the smiling way he would listen to my opinions, often made me wonder, and I began to congratulate myself that I could not be so stupid as the Philosopher said I was, and I, in consequence, thought myself.

I have heard some people talk of the smug satisfaction depicted on the faces and in the manners of celebrities ; but from Gladstone downwards—or should I say upwards?—I have never seen it. It must be the people who fancy themselves great who put on what we should now call “side.”

Nothing could have been more bright and charming than Charles Dickens's expression as he smiled at me when my father told him how much I liked *The Old Curiosity Shop*, and how I wished to be like Little Nell ; nor Tennyson's when he shook my hand and said “I am sure you are proud of your father.”

CHAPTER XIX

NICK-NAMES—"MARIE ANTOINETTE"—"A MODERN ANTIQUE"—A
DANCE AT LADY HARDY'S—CURIOUS PARTNERS—LORD ROMILLY'S
SON—LOUIS BLANC—I DANCE WITH LOUIS BLANC—LOUIS BLANC
AND "MARIE ANTOINETTE"—GENERAL LOWE.

I WAS continually having nick-names given me. It was, I think, a mark of favour, but one I did not always appreciate. For instance, when a gentleman, a young man, but a very old and intimate friend, who had known me from my infancy, took to calling me "Shalott," I naturally wondered. I guessed he meant "the Lady of Shalott," for he was a decidedly dignified little man, and would not be guilty of a joke, especially one that could hurt in any way the feelings of "a member of the fair sex," as he would say. He was always very kind to me, bringing me boxes of bonbons, gloves, chocolates, pocket-handkerchiefs, and many more valuable presents. I am afraid I did not always receive these attentions very graciously; I know when he presented the pocket-handkerchiefs, in a highly ornamental box, I horrified my mother by exclaiming:

"I hope they are hemmed."

This was not a joke on my part, nor was I trying to be sharp or witty, for that kind of speech would not have been thought funny in those days—rudeness was not taken for wit. It was pure consternation on my part, for I hated hemming pocket-handkerchiefs ; I had many and many a time made the first finger of my left hand sore and stiff with such work, while the hem of the handkerchief was ornamented with little specks of blood. Sewing machines were only just coming into fashion ; we had none, for my mother, who was a fine needlewoman, and in her girlhood had made her father a shirt, looked askance at such innovations. But she was quite horrified at my unlucky speech, and I had to apologise.

“That’s all right—never mind, Shalott,” said Mr. ——. “Don’t say anything more about it. I remembered that finger pricked to the bone, and had them stitched.”

I thanked him, and made no further remark then ; but on another occasion I asked him why he had taken to calling me “Shalott,” at the same time reminding him that I was not inordinately fond of onions. He pretended to be horrified at my suggestion that he should think such a thing.

“You know it isn’t that,” he said seriously. “It is your dignified and silent manner, and your admiration for Tennyson’s poems. Do believe me, I never even thought of onions—of course I mean ‘the Lady of Shalott.’”

Thus I got rid of that nick-name, but he then took to "Marianna" (he was very literary in his tastes), and again I had to remonstrate with him. I assured him that it was absurd, that a substantial, cheerful house in the heart of London was not like a "moated Grange"; and therefore the name was ridiculous. He replied that I was "remote"; I thought he meant this for a pun. He assured me it was not so, but that he meant it as a fact—that I had an aloof and remote manner, and he ended by saying :

"If you won't be called 'Shalott' or 'Marianna,' I shall call you 'Antoinette,' for you *are* like Marie Antoinette—every one says so."

"I can't bear being thought like her," I retorted ; but it was useless.

The Hon. Mrs. Norton, Mr. Rice, Mr. Creswick the actor—every one, in fact—declared I was like Marie Antoinette ; and to make matters worse, as I was one day in Oxford Street, with my governess, two people stopped as we were crossing the road—they were an old gentleman and, I should think, his wife.

"There !—there's the girl I told you of. Is she not like Marie Antoinette ?" remarked the old man.

"Like her !—she *is* Marie Antoinette—it is a case of reincarnation," returned his companion.

She spoke so solemnly that I was positively scared, and stood staring at her. My governess hurried me on, and when we were some yards away she turned to me with a smile, and the remark :

"There—now will you believe you are like Marie Antoinette?"

"I am not," I replied stoutly. "But tell me what that lady means by reincarnation."

I had an idea of what it meant, still I hoped I was wrong ; but after my governess's explanation, my heart sank. Was it possible that I had lived before, and really been that unhappy woman? I fought against the idea, but I was very imaginative, and it haunted me. I remember I argued the matter with Miss W—— as well as I was able ; still, I was no match for her, and, whether she did it to tease me, or really believed in the theory, she certainly led me to think that she believed it. In spite of all I could say, she declared that I must have been the French Queen, from my extraordinary likeness. I argued that it was merely the way I did my hair, something in the shape of my face, and a great deal people's fancy. This theory she would not admit, though she must have known it was the true solution. Then I maintained that if I *was* like the French Queen, it was a proof that my soul was *not* hers, "for the Almighty would this time have put her soul into quite a different body." Our usual promenade was up to Regent Circus and back, for I could not walk far. The discussion lasted all the way back, and I remember as we reached our own door I ended with :

"Well, if I am Marie Antoinette, I shall not be so stupid as to say now, when I am told people have

no bread, ‘Then why don’t they eat buns?’ But I don’t believe she did say it—it’s a make-up of the historians ; and as it seems I can’t call my soul my own, I shall name myself ‘the modern antique.’”

Miss W—— went into a fit of laughter, which she vainly tried to stifle as the door opened.

As might be expected, I naturally began to think a good deal about the French Queen ; and as I was at that time reading, in French, Clery’s *Journal des Dernières Heures de Louis XVI.*, she was still more impressed upon me. I had thought her a vain and foolish woman, but my opinions began to change, and I saw that she and her husband were not so bad as their predecessors, but were victims suffering for the sins of their ancestors, more than for their own.

It must have been in the spring of that same year that I went to a dance at Lady Hardy’s. It was a memorable evening, and I had looked forward to it for some time ; but owing to the Philosopher’s pessimistic way of looking at dances, the bore he found them, the melancholy things he said about them, and my own conviction that the late hours and excitement were not good for me—to say nothing of the lassitude and pain I endured afterwards—when the day came round I was in a very unhappy frame of mind and declared I could not go. But a dress had been made for the occasion—a gorgeous dress of white silk, trimmed with blue, and long too, my first long dress ; yet if it had not been for my aunt’s encouragement and

persuasion I should have stayed at home and never even seen Louis Blanc.

I can so well remember that evening—how my mother and my aunt hovered about me, helping me to dress—in my grandmother's room too, for mine, which led out of it, was not nearly big enough for such a grand occasion. I remember my aunt's comments on the perfect fit of the dress ; she said, "It looked as if I had been melted and poured in," and then, when I laughed and exclaimed "What a good idea !" she promptly told me "it was a very vulgar saying, and that I was not to repeat it."

My father, my governess, and the servants all admired me in my pretty dress. Every one but the Philosopher had something pleasant to say—he alone was gloomy and cross. He was the fly in my ointment, the skeleton at the feast. His thoughts were then, as always, bent on science, and to that he had added volunteering. "Caper about in a heated room like an idiot he would *not*—it was not manly, and to see others doing so was not amusing. As to girls, they were a nuisance." But in spite of his grumbles he had to take me, and so disagreeable was he on the way that I cried ; whereupon he said :

"Now make your eyes red, and arrive looking a sight !"

His tone was so vindictively savage that I could not help laughing, whereupon he exclaimed :

"Now go into hysterics !"

I stopped and let him growl on, taking no notice, which was the only thing to do.

The room was full when we arrived, but after we had shaken hands with Sir Thomas and Lady Hardy, and Iza had nodded to me from her place in the first quadrille, I found General Lowe at my side, bowing and smiling, and declaring he was lost in admiration and hardly knew "his little girl." "If you can't manage that train, come to me and I'll be your train-bearer," he whispered as I was carried off to join in the lancers. "That train" was only about two inches on the ground, yet as I danced I would have given anything for my short petticoats.

My first partner was a melancholy young man who had been disappointed in love, or so he said, and he came up to me at intervals during the evening and insisted on telling me his miseries. I comforted him as well as I could. Never having then suffered from the complaint, it was wonderful what sage advice I gave him. I danced all the square dances ; but as the round ones were forbidden by Dr. Richardson's orders, I had a great deal of sitting out. In the middle of the next set of lancers my partner horrified me by saying :

"It is curious to find oneself dancing in the same set of quadrilles with three people who resemble respectively Christ, Shakespeare, and Marie Antoinette."

I stared. "Christ !" I said. "You mean Mr. Joseph Knight, I suppose ?"

"Yes ; don't say you cannot see the likeness."

"He is like a print I have seen of a picture by a Frenchman. I have forgotten his name. But I do not care for it, I do not think it can have been like Christ ; still, I wish you had not reminded me of it."

"Why not ?" he said, "you should be pleased" ; but here the exigences of the grand chain cut him short, and the dance being over I avoided that young man and Mr. Joseph Knight for the rest of the evening.

As to the gentleman who thought himself like Shakespeare, I considered him a mere caricature. He had sloping shoulders, a bald head, and long, thin hair. I do not remember his name, but he was a literary man of no mean ability, though not a well-known novelist.

During the round dances I ensconced myself on a comfortable seat just inside the smaller drawing-room, whence I could watch the dancing in each room. There the son of Lord Romilly found me, and asked me several times to valse with him ; and when I would not consent to do so, he catechised me in this way :

"What's the matter with you ?"

"Nothing."

"Oh, but there must be something. Have you got heart disease ?"

"No."

"Are you consumptive?"

"No."

"No, you don't look so, and I shouldn't think you were—except in the way of victuals."

I was amazed at this speech, for manners were better in those days than they are now; but I could not help laughing.

"Well, I must go now, but I shall have that round dance," he said.

And he managed it later in the evening, by getting the band to turn a square dance into a valse.

It was whilst I was sitting in this corner that Lady Hardy came to me and said she wanted to introduce me to M. Louis Blanc, and she indicated a very short, grey-headed man with brilliant dark eyes, who sat in a corner near the window in the same room, and almost opposite me.

"I am very anxious to get him to dance," she said; "I have asked him many times, and offered to introduce many girls to him, but he says he will 'only dance with Marie Antoinette,' and that's you. He's a red Republican, you know," she added with a laugh.

I declined the honour, but when one's hostess is determined what can one do? I had to give in, and was led up to the little man, who bowed in derision, or so I thought. He could not dance at all, and said so. He never spoke a truer word. I pushed and pulled, and, with the help of the other

couples, hustled him through the lancers ; but as he would do his steps and bow over my hand every time we met, the grand chain was a hopeless muddle. Fortunately we danced in the small drawing-room, which would only hold one set, and we had it to ourselves, except for a few spectators.

There was a good deal of chatter and laughter, and when we finished the dance Louis Blanc thanked me for piloting him through it, and apologised for dancing so badly. I said something polite in return. I was beginning to forget that he was Louis Blanc and I Marie Antoinette, and no doubt we should have become very friendly, but the other dancers crowded round us, and some officious person, clapping his hands softly, said :

“Bravo ! Louis Blanc and Marie Antoinette !”

That was too much for me. I retorted, “I am *not* Marie Antoinette !”

“Oh yes, yes you are !” said several voices. “Isn’t she ?” appealing to Louis Blanc.

The Frenchman, smiling and bowing, kissed my hand and declared I was “the *image* of a young portrait of her,” and so he had “determined to dance with the French Queen.” Now I looked upon all this not so much as a foolish game, but that they were laughing and sneering at the unfortunate woman whose double I was said to be ; so I turned to Louis Blanc and asked :

“How dare you, a Radical, a red Republican,

propose dancing with a Queen? You know the real Marie Antoinette would not have spoken to you!"—("That's true!" cried some one.)—"Your countrymen behaved in a most horrible and abominable manner. The French Revolution is a scandal you cannot, as a nation, get over." *

"That's true!"—"She has sense."—"She speaks well,"—were the sentences I heard whispered round me; but Louis Blanc shook his head as if he did not understand, and turned to a countryman of his, who evidently explained.

"Ah! C'est vrai!" he ejaculated, and I continued more slowly and very distinctly:

"You sneer and mock at your Queen, whose head you chopped off. I believe she was not so foolish as she was made out. She was in a difficult position, which, as *you* did not live then, *you* can know nothing about—and she was very young, no older than I am now, when she came to the throne."

Here Louis Blanc shook his head, and I saw I had made a mistake; but it in no wise deterred me. I said a great deal about Republicans, their impatience, impertinence, and violence, that I do not now remember, and ended up with:

"Whatever were her faults, she suffered, and she went to her death like a Queen. Surely you can let her rest *now*."

* I had no doubt heard my father, or one of his literary friends, make this remark.

I had spoken with the greatest vigour and emphasis, which had silenced their sneers and their laughter ; but my excitement was cooling, and my voice faltered and broke. I turned away, and the little crowd silently opened to let me pass.

“Look, her eyes flash scorn, as Marie Antoinette’s did at the rabble,” said a voice.

I gave my hand a backward fling and retorted, “You are the rabble!—let me pass.” Directly I had spoken I was ashamed of myself, and my anger cooled.

I saw the Philosopher’s youthful face looking curiously at me from a doorway ; he was evidently wondering what had disturbed my temper. I saw General Lowe coming to the rescue ; I turned to him, but M. Louis Blanc stopped me with a burst of complimentary eloquence, only one sentence of which I distinctly remember ; it was :

“If *you* had been the Queen there would have been no Revolution.”

I gave an indignant denial and waved my hand to wave him aside.

“Ah, no !” he cried, taking my hand ; “I am not sneering, I mean it. It is a new idea you give me of Marie Antoinette—yes, there’s something in it—I’ll not laugh at her again, I promise you.”

These, though not quite all his actual words, which were more complimentary to me, were the gist of what he said, as he wished me a happier fate than hers. But I heard him, as I walked away, tell his

countryman that I was too *spirituelle*, too highly strung, to have a happy life. "But what a likeness, what a likeness ! Ah ! poor Marie Antoinette !"

I shivered with nervous exhaustion and excitement, and felt ready to cry, especially when I saw the dancers from the large room come crowding in, asking, "What is it?—what has happened?" But General Lowe turned a smiling face to them and made some jesting reply ; and then as we came into the supper room he patted my hand, which lay on his arm, and wanted to know "who had been upsetting his little girl." So I told him what had happened, and ended by saying, as I usually did, that I hated to be thought like any one who was so ill-used and unhappy.

"Like her !" exclaimed the General. "Why, Marie Antoinette had grey hair and a Roman nose, and you have neither."

"That's just what I think !" I exclaimed eagerly, "but people say——"

"People say anything, so don't worry yourself, little girl. Now what will you have to eat?"

I chose my usual party supper of cold beef and a glass of port. We were soon seated at a little table, the General deep in military matters, when Lady Hardy found us, and, sitting down at my side, said, "You have made quite a conquest of Louis Blanc." But here the General broke in quickly by asking her to take a glass of port. She lifted her hands in horror, and scolded him for drinking it.

“Don’t you know,” she said, “it flushes one’s face and makes one look ugly?”

The General laughed, and filling his glass drank Lady Hardy’s health in port.

“It will take a great deal to make this child look ugly,” was his joking reply.

CHAPTER XX

MADOX BROWN—THE PRE-RAPHAELITE YOUNG LADIES—"A GREAT DISTINCTION"—THE PRE-RAPHAELITE YOUNG LADIES ON WILLIAM MORRIS—SIR BENJAMIN RICHARDSON ON TRUTH.

IT was at Lady Hardy's At Homes that I met the Madox Browns, O'Shaughnessys, Hepworth Dixons, Cordy Jepherson, and W. S. Wills. Mr. Madox Brown was one of the Pre-Raphaelite school; he was a great friend of Dante Gabriel Rossetti and William Morris. Rossetti was his pupil, or at any rate worked in Mr. Madox Brown's studio, and they influenced each other greatly. It was after they had been working together, and when Mr. Madox Brown had taken up Pre-Raphaelitism—in fact, in the days when he was looked upon as the father of the Pre-Raphaelite school—that I used to meet him.

He was a tall, good-looking man, with a long beard, almost down to his waist. It was brown and flecked with white, and reminded me of fine seaweed. He never talked much, nor was he ever very sociable, even to his hostess, who was always so talkative, good-tempered, and charming to every one, that it was difficult not to become genial in her presence. But

Mr. Madox Brown used to walk about and occasionally pose near the piano or fireplace, and I used to look at him and admire him, and try to think what hero of mine he would do for ; but unfortunately one of Leah's nonsense verses would come into my head, and I found myself quoting :

There was an old man with a beard,
Who said : " It is just as I feared ;
Two owls and a hen, four larks and a wren,
Have all built their nests in my beard !

It was the beard that did it, and even to this day when any one quotes that verse Mr. Madox Brown's tall figure, serious face, and long beard come before me. I am always annoyed at this freak of fancy, for I liked the artist ; there was nothing frivolous or undignified about him, and even in those days, more than these, I disliked to see people make themselves ridiculous, especially if they were authors or artists.

In the sixties and seventies the childishness of grown-up people was not so apparent as now—seemliness in behaviour was more studied. The comic man of the party seldom went further than pretending to draw corks by putting his fingers into his mouth and suddenly withdrawing them, tapping his cheeks to imitate liquid coming from a bottle, buzzing like a fly, and so on. These exhibitions seldom occurred except at children's parties ; and though the performer made himself look very hot and ridiculous, the spectacle he presented was as nothing compared with that of a

party of grown-up people in the present day when they have just finished tobogganing down the stairs on tea trays, or are romping over Puss-in-the-corner, Hunt-the-slipper, and other childish games.

It was the quiet dignity of Mr. Madox Brown I admired, but I used very much to wish he would make himself comfortable and sit down and talk about pictures. Though he belonged to the Pre-Raphaelite school, and was a great admirer of Dante Gabriel Rossetti—and there was at that time a great deal of talk about Rossetti and also about William Morris—Mr. Madox Brown seldom joined in the conversation, which he left entirely to his wife, daughters, and the Misses O'Shaughnessy.

Only once did I hear him speak at any length, and that was one moon-lit night, when we walked home through the silent streets and squares—a whole, rather noisy, party of us. Mr. Madox Brown, my mother, and I walked together, and he and she talked about painting, and very interesting the conversation was. The artist became quite eloquent and genial, and one really saw what a charming man he was. He had found a congenial spirit, a sister of the brush; for my mother painted in those days, exhibiting in the Royal Academy, and most of the other exhibitions.

Mrs. Madox Brown and her daughters were prominent members of this literary and artistic coterie. They were always dressed in what was then considered the height of artistic and æsthetic fashion. It

consisted in wearing soft, limp, full dresses, with short waists, or none at all. The material was generally either cashmere or what is now called nun's veiling; the favourite colours dull brick red, peacock blue, sage green, and cinnamon brown. The dresses were often cut slightly square at the throat and had very full sleeves; jewellery of the barbaric kind was worn with them, and the whole effect was Rossettian and Burne-Jonesian in the extreme. But these ladies were not quite so consumptive and willowy-looking as Burne-Jones made his figures—no human being could be so and live; but their hair, colour, and pose were very like a Burne-Jones picture, and I wondered how they did it. Was it, I asked myself, eating very little and drinking vinegar? Did they breakfast on red currant jelly and a glass of champagne, as I had heard of Swinburne doing, and dine off the wing of a lark, as another genius was supposed to do?

There is something in the superior way that very slim, willowy people look at big ones that makes the latter ashamed of their size. In the days I am writing about the average height of a woman was, I should think, not more than five feet three inches, and I was four inches above that, and thought too tall. I should say now the average size must be five feet five or six. The Misses Madox Brown and their friends looked tall from their slimness, and Miss Duffus Hardy and I used to squeeze ourselves into as small a space as we could, and sit and admire them,

though they never spoke to us that I can remember. But this did not render us unhappy, for we had each such a happy knack of being interested in all we saw and heard that we were not at all self-conscious ; and this trait led to a scene which my father witnessed, and which delighted him very much.

At a dance at Mr. Henry Dunphie's, of *The Morning Post*, when the ladies had left the gentlemen in the supper room, a gentleman (a stranger to my father) rose and made a little speech, in which he alluded to the way ladies were toasted in the olden time, for their beauty and wit, and said that though it was an old fashion he thought it a good one, and wished to propose such a toast. From certain speeches that had come to his ears he knew he had all the men on his side ; he saw they had their glasses charged, but this must be drunk in bumpers and with honours. Every one filled his glass and rose to his feet, and my father's amazement was great when he heard (I quote the toast as it was told me) : “ Here's to the health and happiness of Miss Hain Friswell and Miss Duffus Hardy—the two prettiest, most unaffected, and charming girls in London ! ” We heard the noise and cheering upstairs in the ballroom and wondered what was happening. Probably if such a scene had occurred at a dance in these days it would have found its way into one or more of the papers ; but in those times people were not fond of advertising all that was said and done in private—they did not think it good form

for their families or themselves to be so advertised, and my father would have disliked it intensely. But I have never seen him more pleased than he was when he told me, as we drove home, of the honour that had been done us.

He impressed upon me that it was a great distinction and a most unprecedented thing in those days, something to be very proud of; and I was not to think it was done to flatter him—the proposer did not know him, nor Lady Hardy. Sir Thomas was not there, he seldom went to dances. My father went on to tell me that it was “a great mark of admiration on the part of the gentlemen,” and one to be especially proud of, “as they were all men of culture, and many of them distinguished in literature, art, and the stage.” But what had pleased him most was the expression “unaffected”—that was, he said, “the highest compliment; beauty and wit were nothing if a woman was affected—to be natural was the mark of a true gentlewoman.”

I can remember my feelings during this speech. I was unfeignedly glad my father was so pleased; yet I was rather astonished at his pleasure and not at all elated myself. I never could believe in compliments; I looked upon them merely as a finish to a gentleman's education, a *façon de parler*, of the least consequence. They ran, as a gentleman once angrily told me, “like water off a duck's back.”

But in mentioning the party at Henry Dunphie's I

am anticipating, for it occurred a year or two after the time when Miss Duffus Hardy and I used to meet Mrs. Madox Brown and her daughters, and sit listening to their praise of Swinburne, Rossetti, and above all William Morris. These ladies and their friends used to throw the ball of conversation from one to the other, working themselves up into a great state of enthusiasm, which was quite entertaining to their two girl admirers.

Mr. William Morris was their *rara avis*; they eulogised his work in the most extravagant manner, from the poem “The Earthly Paradise,” down through wall papers, chintzes, and old furniture, till they arrived at the internal and external decorations of his shop in Oxford Street. In everything they lauded Morris to the skies, and allowed no one else to get a word in edgeways.

But, if Miss Hardy and I were interested in what they said, and their way of saying it, I think Lady Hardy and my mother became rather bored. Now, as I have said elsewhere, my mother was always an admirable listener; she was repose personified, and I had been that very evening contrasting her quiet, dignified manner with the animated volubility of some of the other ladies. I must here mention that they never spoke of Mr. Morris’s “shop,” but called it “the establishment.” I suppose this puzzled my mother, for she at last asked :

“What is the establishment?”

They explained.

"Oh, you mean the shop in Oxford Street," returned my mother.

"*You* may call it a shop, but it is always spoken of as the establishment."

"But why not call it a shop?" said my mother. "I thought goods were displayed in the window for sale"

"So they are. Mr. Morris has some beautiful Louis XV. chairs and cabinets that are in the window; but for all that one would not like to say he keeps a shop." This was said in the most reproving tone.

"But what nonsense when he does keep one!" replied my mother, then added, "Is he not a Socialist?"

"Oh yes, he believes every one ought to be equal, and all that kind of thing; but I don't think he would like to be considered a tradesman. I know he does not consider himself one."

"Fancy calling William Morris a tradesman!" exclaimed a young lady in an awed voice. "He's a giant—a reformer. No one would dare to say he keeps a shop."

"The place in Oxford Street *is* a shop," returned my mother determinedly, "and I shall call it a shop."

This put an end to the discussion and so damped their enthusiasm that they said no more. But all these ladies looked in anything but a friendly manner at my mother, and a young lady, whose name I have

forgotten, but whose “principal feature was eye, and greatest accomplishment gush,” evidently considered her a Philistine of the most dangerous and rampant kind.

It struck me at that time—I was not then used to the inconsistencies of people—as very odd that these ladies should admire a man for his socialistic opinions, and yet be so far from taking him seriously as to declare he would be false to his tenets by being ashamed of calling himself a tradesman, or a shop a shop. I had yet to learn that there are people who hate above all things to call things by their right names; who like to pretend and cheat themselves into believing that things are not as they are, or what they are, but something infinitely better and less prosaic. I had illusions of my own—very many—but it puzzled me to imagine why “establishment” should sound grander, or more poetical, than “shop.” “Establishment” gave me the idea of a gloomy, uninteresting building, of the warehouse or public baths sort, while a “shop” was an artistic, brilliant, and beautiful place.

In telling this little anecdote to my father, and making him laugh at the indignation and contempt these ladies showed for my mother’s down-right speech and manner, I expressed my wonder at Mr. William Morris’s views, as represented by his friends.

“Morris has none of that snobbishness about him,” said my father; “and if he heard it, would be the first to say ‘preserve me from my friends,’ ”

I was always sorry my mother had insisted on the word "shop," as it ended the conversation, and seemed to offend the coterie of æsthetic ladies. I said so to my father ; he agreed, and remarked that people seldom relish the truth.

Talking of truth reminds me of an anecdote of Dr. Richardson and my father. When Dr. Richardson's book, *Hygeia, the City of Health*, was published, my father said to him one day chaffingly :

"What do you mean by telling us that all our houses are unhealthy and insanitary because we have paper on our walls, and because we haven't our kitchens in the attics?"

"Ah, Friswell," he replied, "if you want people to notice you, it's no use telling them the truth ; the thing is, to start a thundering big lie—then they'll believe in you."

CHAPTER XXI

MR. JOSEPH ELLIS—SNOWED UP ON THE LINE—AN OLD ENGLISH HOME
—"ORION" HORNE—MR. DALLAS—MISS ISABELLA DALLAS GLYN—
MISS GLYN ON MARRIAGE—AN EVENING PARTY AND AN AMUSING
INCIDENT—A NEW VERSION OF PETRARCH AND LAURA.

ONE of the most remarkable men I knew was Mr. Joseph Ellis. He was a gentleman of the old school; his manners were punctilious, and his dress was eccentric. He always wore a frock coat and a large silk cravat, which was tied in a loose bow with flowing ends, and was generally of some brilliant colour; the sleeves of his coat were made very long and lined at the wrists with velvet; he then turned them right back and they formed a cuff; his shirt and collar were of very fine linen and seemed to have little stiffness in them. In the country and sometimes in Brighton, he wore short Wellington or riding-boots, his trousers tucked in the tops; his felt hat had rather a high crown; he had keen, bright, kindly eyes under overhanging brows, a bald head, long iron-grey hair, and a bushy beard. His father had built and kept the old Star and Garter Hotel at Richmond, and he had known many very famous people in his day. Mr. Joseph Ellis was the elder

brother of Sir John Whittaker Ellis, and the cleverest of a large family who were all successful men of business. Mr. Ellis was not only a first-rate man of business, but had great good taste in both literature and art. He was not bitten by the vulgar money-at-any-cost mania, but was absolutely fond of literature and art, not as an investment, but from pure love. In this he was greatly in advance of his family and friends, who were all very charming and amiable people, but, with one or two exceptions, did not at all appreciate the beautiful things which he collected around him, nor the clever people he often invited to his house. He was, too, a poet, and his books, *Cæsar in Egypt*, *Constanza*, *Columbus at Seville*, and others, contrasted well with much that was written then and is written and published now.

The first edition of *Columbus at Seville* came out in 1869, the second in 1876, before Tennyson's *Columbus*, which was published in 1880. A copy of the second edition of *Columbus at Seville* was sent by the author to Tennyson. Both the poems, *Columbus at Seville* and Tennyson's *Columbus* are in monologue, the difference being that one is a soliloquy, the other an objurgation ; but, admitting some differences, there are many similarities, as there no doubt must be when two poets take the same subject. Hence the author of *Columbus at Seville* is on his defence, and says in his preface to the third edition that "he can scarcely be unconscious how, without explanation,

he might be accused of paraphrase, or at least of reverberation," and any one who reads them both will grant this.

It was during my Christmas holidays that I first saw Mr. Ellis, who came one snowy winter's day to Great Russell Street and carried me off in a cab to Victoria Station, where we entered a train bound for Balcombe in Sussex. I was provided with a footwarmer and a carriage rug ; the latter Mr. Ellis tucked well round me. Then he took off his soft felt, high-crowned hat, pushed back his long hair, and donned a black velvet smoking-cap, and, tucking a rug round himself, proceeded to fall asleep. Three old gentlemen in the carriage did likewise, and I was left to my own reflections, which as the train sped on into the darkness were anything but pleasant.

I did not know Mr. Ellis's family, and felt nervous at going among strangers ; the weather was not genial, and I seemed to be travelling far away from London into quite an unknown country. My companions were all, with the exception of Mr. Ellis, white-haired and pallid ; he was pale, and his hair and beard were streaked with grey. They all looked ghastly in the dim light of the oil lamps ; the noise of the train prevented my hearing their breathing, and I thought they looked as if they were dead. The idea was appalling—I tried not to think, not to look at them ; but I grew more and more nervous, my feet were like ice, and my teeth began to chatter.

I was so concerned at the look of my four companions that I had not noticed how the train had slackened speed ; but I became conscious of the windows of other carriages being let down with sundry bumps, and of a great deal of whistling. At last with a jerk the train came to a stand ; the three old gentlemen, like so many Rip Van Winkles, began slowly to rouse themselves and feel their *ellebows* and *k-nees*, and Mr. Ellis opened his eyes and stared at the white-faced, terror-stricken girl before him.

“Why, Miss Laura, Miss Laura !” he said, and then, “God bless me !” he cried, “what are we standing here for ?”

Up he jumped, down went the window with a bang, out went his head.

“Porter ! porter !” he shouted, “why don’t you answer ? What the devil are you about ?—blocked—train blocked ?—stuff !—snowstorm ?—fiddlesticks !—line covered ?—well, make haste and clear it then ; don’t keep us here all night.”

Up went the window again, Mr. Ellis making a peculiar blowing noise with his lips, which made me think he was very cold, but which when I knew him better I found was only a curious habit he had. My courage was quite restored ; the sound of his loud and resolute voice brought much comfort to me. Down he sat, and leaning forward took hold of my hands, unbuttoned my gloves, pulled them off, and began to rub my hands.

“That’s better,” he said ; “why, I began to think you were petrified—poof, poof!—what should I have done with a statue?” Then turning to the old gentlemen, he remarked, “What a scandalous line this is !”

The three Rip Van Winkles agreed, and even sat up, with sundry groans in the process, and talked in a rather ghoulish way of snowstorms and accidents through trains being snowed up, also of snowstorms during mountain climbing. Some of those tales were weird and wonderful, and quite dramatic as they were told to the accompaniment of flashing lights, hoarse shouts, and continual vituperation from some of the passengers in the other carriages. Mr. Ellis was very restless, and showed it by frequently letting down the window, when the drifting snow and icy blast would rush in ; he also insisted on some one coming to report how things were getting on. Once he induced me to look out, and I saw an animated and curious scene—a band of men with picks, shovels, and innumerable lanterns, whose light fell on a great mound of snow, while the firelight from the engine lighted up some of their faces, and the engine itself puffed and snorted like some live thing in impatience and pain. It was an hour before the line was cleared and we could proceed.

We were both so cold that we could scarcely walk up the long flight of steps that led from the platform at Balcombe Station to the road ; there we found Mr.

Ellis's brougham waiting. I stepped in, but my host elected to walk, so we went along the snowy road at a walking pace, Mr. Ellis talking to his coachman, and now and again coming to the window to speak to me. No vehicle passed us on the road, nor were there any shops or houses : except where the carriage lights shone on the snow all was darkness and desolation, and to a girl used to the lights and noise of London and the country town of Watford it seemed the end of the world. From the road we turned into a long avenue, and at last drew up at "Monks," a quaint house that had once been a monastery.

I entered a large roomy porch, and was taken through the hall to the drawing-room—a long, low room with an organ at one end of it, a piano near the fireplace, the walls covered with water colours, round them quaint old furniture of the Sheraton period ; a modern chair or two and a settee covered in chintz stood out in the room. Mrs. Ellis and her daughter came forward and welcomed me, making me take a low chair in front of a glorious fire, built up of large logs placed across dogs. I knew then what was the cause of the curious pungent smell I noticed directly I entered the house—it was the smell of the wood ashes. There were no grates, except in the bedrooms, and in all the rooms wood was most generally burnt.

"Monks" was an ideal old English home, for Mr. Ellis farmed his own land, brewed his own beer

and made his own bread. I was delighted, and never tired of looking at the churning, brewing, and baking ; though I never saw Mr. or Mrs. Ellis in either brewery, dairy, or bakehouse. One was in the library reading or writing, the other in the drawing-room discoursing most excellent music on organ or piano.

A year or two after, in Mr. Ellis's house in Brighton, I met Mr. R. H. Horne, the author of *Orion*, a magnificent poem published at the price of one farthing, to show at what a price the Philistine Englishman, in the author's opinion, appraised true poetry. He was a little old man, full of quaint sayings and pungent satire ; he was generally known as "Orion" Horne, and had been, I believe, a great friend of the Brownings, of whom he delighted to talk.

It was at Brighton too that I met Dallas, a leader writer on *The Times*, and husband of Miss Glyn, a well-known actress and reader of Shakespeare's plays. I remember going into the dining-room in Hampton Lodge, and seeing Mr. Ellis showing a very good-looking man some fine pictures which hung on the walls. I was retiring with a murmured apology when Mr. Ellis called me and introduced me to Mr. Dallas.

"This is Hain Friswell's daughter," said Mr. Ellis.

"Why, she's like——" began Dallas, but I was gone before the sentence was finished.

We were Dante's Beatrice* and Petrarch's Laura

* Miss Ellis's name was Beatrice

down at Brighton, and that was bad enough ; I did not want to hear about an unfortunate Queen.

Not long after I was introduced to Mr. Dallas I met Miss Glyn, or Isabella Dallas Glyn, as she was called. I had heard her in *Anthony and Cleopatra*, and did not like it—which no doubt was bad taste on my part, as she was considered very clever ; but I am not very fond of hearing a play read, and I thought Miss Glyn too big for *Cleopatra*, whose mummy I knew well in the British Museum.

Miss Glyn stayed several days at Hampton Lodge whilst I was there ; she took a great liking to me and used to come into my bedroom, which was a very large room, and sit by the sofa while I was lying down ; or she would pace up and down the room talking and telling me anecdotes, till Mrs. Ellis's maid would come to dress me for dinner, and then away she went to don some gorgeous apparel, of which she always asked my opinion. She was a fine, stout, handsome woman, with a bright complexion, and very long dark hair. She used to talk in an abrupt manner, and criticised her host and hostess and their friends in the most free-and-easy style, which made me boil with indignation, for I was very fond of Mr. and Mrs. Ellis and their family, and Balcombe and Brighton were almost like my own home. The first time I had any conversation with Miss Glyn she began :

“ Well, so I hear from Ellis that you have seen Dallas—what did you think of him ? ”

"I did not think anything of him," I replied, too astonished at her address to consider my answer.

This reply tickled her hugely; she threw back her head and laughed.

"Bravo! you know he's my husband, I suppose?"

I did know, but had forgotten it, and was overwhelmed with confusion; fortunately she was too fond of talking to notice that I failed to reply.

"He's a handsome man—every one must admit that—but, the temper of a fiend—so we parted; and now take my advice and don't marry—but there, what's the use of my saying that? With your hair, eyes, and complexion do you think the men will let you escape?—no, of course not."

I was glad she answered herself. She took a turn or two up and down the room, and then, stopping abruptly near me, said:

"You have a beautiful voice; why don't you go on the stage?"

"I should like to be a ballad singer," I replied.

"Concert singer—nonsense! Go on the stage; I should love to teach you elocution."

I almost said that my father would rather see me in my grave than an actress, but I refrained in time and told her I should like it, which was true. Several times she renewed her offers of teaching me elocution, but my father would not hear of it.

"Do anything but marry," was her advice to me when she and I left Brighton and travelled to London

together. Hearing I was collecting autographs, she sent me a great many.

When the British Association met at Brighton Mr. Ellis would collect round him most of the well-known men who came down to lecture or speak, and entertain them right royally, throwing his house open and giving luncheons, dinners, and conversaziones. At the latter he turned out all his art treasures, and the house was like a museum. Another time he had a stage and sloping seats erected in the library, and he was made up and dressed for the part of Columbus and recited his own poem.

He read and recited very well, but in rather a monotonous tone ; however, as the poem, *Columbus at Seville*, is a soliloquy, perhaps it was as well to make it mournful and somewhat stilted. Mr. Ellis looked very well in a long black velvet garment ; he was dressed after a print in the British Museum, and was certainly very like it.

The room was packed, and the recitation proceeded for some time without interruption ; it is a long poem in blank verse.

"I told them I was serving God and Queen,
And forward must they with me to the end,"

said Columbus, and then continued for some thirty lines more, till in a fine burst he said :

"At earliest break of dawn they shouted 'Land !'
Delightful thought ! when first I lifted hand
And kissed . . ."

“Sh-should like to kish shure hand,” said a thick voice.

“What ! what ! what ! ” answered Columbus testily. “What is that you say ?”

“Sh-sh-should like to be the Queen and kish shure hand.”

An audible titter ran through the room, but I am glad to say it was instantly suppressed, and many people glared savagely at the man, who was the culprit, and who, with bloodshot, twinkling eyes and Bardolphian nose, sat just behind me. I, with one of Mr. Ellis's sons, was in the front row of seats, and we both suffered considerably in trying not to laugh, for the descent from the stately Columbus to the irritated poet was so rapid and so characteristic.

For my own part I could have slain the man, I was so sorry the incident occurred, so sorry for Mr. Ellis ; for, with the fondness of the ordinary biped for jokes, all serious thought of the poem was forgotten, and after it was over every one talked of the man's interruption and Mr. Ellis's want of presence of mind in answering.

I used to feel very proud, but also somewhat embarrassed, when Mr. Ellis read his poems to me. I was very fond of poetry and used even then to read Keats, Pope, and Coleridge, as well as my beloved Longfellow and Tennyson ; but I felt I was not competent to criticise any one's poems, and one day in my ignorance I said so to my host. It was a fine

spring morning, and I was getting rather tired of sitting in the library, with its windows of tinted glass, that only looked upon stuccoed walls which were a few feet off—for Brighton economises space even in its best streets and amongst its largest houses.

I fancy I can see the sombre room, lined with books ; the poet verging on old age, the girl on the threshold of womanhood ; it was Petrarch and Laura over again, but with a difference—one might say with many differences, for to my “old knight,” as Mr. Ellis used to call himself, I was only a child, and when he read his poems to me it was only for lack of some one older and more appreciative to read them to. I knew it, knew it all the time, and used to do my utmost to understand and appreciate, and to please him, for I was very fond of him, and I knew well the longing for appreciation and interest that all authors feel. He wrote some charming sonnets, and those I liked to hear him read ; but on the particular sunny morning of which I am thinking he was reading *Cæsar in Egypt*, and, if the truth must be known, I always hated Anthony and Cleopatra, and pitied Cæsar. Then the sunshine called me—and I loved the sea intensely and could fancy how it sparkled in the sun ; so when Mr. Ellis paused in his reading and looked at me, instead of praising the passage, I said :

“I—I really don’t think I am competent to judge of——”

“My dear Miss Laura,” broke out the poet, “I

don't want *your* criticism ; I am only reading to amuse you."

I felt very much ashamed of myself, and yet had a strong desire to laugh. Mr. Ellis sighed and looked at me, half closing the book. I wanted to say, "Do go on, I *am* interested," but the sea and the sunshine called me, I longed to be on the beach. While I hesitated the door opened and Mrs. Ellis stood in the doorway.

"I want Laura to come for a drive ; it's too bad to keep her in this bright morning, Joseph."

"Take her away, *I* don't want her," replied Mr. Ellis sharply, and I, with burning cheeks, escaped.

CHAPTER XXII

AT FRAMPTON COURT—THE HON. MRS. NORTON AND HER SONS—TWO
AMUSING MISTAKES—BEXLEY HEATH—THE VILLAGE AUTOCRATS—
THEIR OPINION OF THE AUTHOR OF "THE EARTHLY PARADISE."

IN the memoir of my father I have told how he went down to Frampton Court to stay with Mr. Richard Brinsley Sheridan, and to meet Motley, the author of *The Dutch Republic*, and that he was taken with a fit of coughing at dinner, and found he had broken a blood-vessel on the lungs. He left the table, went into the library and rang the bell. A footman answered it, and he requested him to send for a doctor and then to assist him to bed, but on no account was he to alarm or disturb the company. My father was so pale and spoke with such difficulty that the man was too frightened to remember what he was told, and rushed into the dining-room exclaiming, "He's dying! he's dying! the gentleman's dying!"

Mr. and Mrs. Sheridan, the Hon. Mrs. Norton, and several people came to my father, who begged them to go back to the dinner table, and not to be alarmed. All he wanted was to go to bed and to take ice or vinegar to stop the bleeding till the doctor

came. My mother was telegraphed for. I so well remember the telegram coming late at night, and the awful look on my mother's face. She and my grandmother were up all night ; my mother could not sleep, and wandered about the house while my grandmother looked out trains and packed up. In the cold, grey morning my mother started, and soon after a telegram came for me to go with her, but it was too late.

My father was most seriously ill—in fact, he nearly died. My mother never left him for ten days, and Mr. and Mrs. Sheridan and Mrs. Norton used to write and send up to her numbers of little notes. They spent a very dull Christmas, having to put off all the mummers and other village festivities. My father and mother were over a month at Frampton Court, and a lasting friendship was thus cemented between them, the Sheridans, and the Hon. Mrs. Norton, who was Mr. Sheridan's sister, and granddaughter of Sheridan the dramatist.

On Sunday afternoons in the season Mr. and Mrs. Sheridan, often accompanied by Mrs. Norton, would come to our house for an hour's chat ; M. Van-de-Weyer, the Belgian Minister, himself an author, would drive up in his carriage and stay to tea, and other well-known people, artists, actors, editors, and poets would drop in. Mrs. Norton was a most charming old lady, still handsome, with bright dark eyes and beautiful white hair ; her granddaughter was a girl of about my own age, her grandson, Richard Norton,

now Lord Grantley, a handsome boy a year or two younger.

My father and mother often went to luncheon with Mrs. Norton in Chesterfield Street, Mayfair, and now and then I was especially invited, she always writing and speaking to me as "Marie Antoinette."

I well remember the first time my father and mother took me to luncheon with her. Except for her granddaughter she was alone. It was on Academy Sunday, so my father and mother left to visit some studios, promising to return for me. Then we adjourned to Mrs. Norton's pretty drawing-room, and we girls sat on a rug at her feet, while she told us stories of her youth. I can recall the scene now—the beautiful old lady, the pretty room, the bright fire, and the pale sunlight that, struggling through the rose-coloured blinds, threw on sofas, chairs, cabinets, and old china a mystic glow. One anecdote I remember; it was about her sons—she had three, and one day she was talking to them, telling them that when they grew up they would have to get their own living. She told them how great a thing it was to grow up an honest, brave, true-hearted man, and she illustrated her little lecture by giving instances of some of the great men who had fought for the good of mankind in the Army, the Church, Law or Science. When she finished she asked:

"Now, boys, what would you like to be?" and they cried with one voice:

“Freebooters, mamma, freebooters!”

After the anecdotes I sang to her, amongst other songs, her own “Juanita.” I remember she sat close by my side, and told me how to say “Nita!—Oo—anita!” in a very staccato manner, and she paid my voice a great many compliments. Then we returned to the fire and she told us stories of her home, of her sisters Lady Dufferin and the Duchess of Somerset. When my father and mother returned for me and we at last emerged into the street, I felt as if I had come from the Old World into the New, and it seemed not half so pleasant as that in which those three lovely women lived. But I had heard nothing of troubles; the rose-coloured light of that pretty room had coloured the stories, and I was only conscious of a vague sadness in Mrs. Norton’s face and voice.

I think here I must tell a rather good story which, though it has nothing whatever to do with Mrs. Norton, I yet always think of when she comes into my mind.

Not many years ago I was calling on some people who lived on Wimbledon Common. It was an At Home day and the room was fairly full. As I sat down near the tea table my hostess said to a lady at my side:

“Let me introduce Mrs. Myall to you; she is the daughter of a well-known literary man, the late Mr. Hain Friswell—of course you know his books?”

“Ah, yes—er—let me see.” She paused an imperceptible moment, and then, looking at me with a beaming smile, said, “He is the author of *The School for Scandal*, is he not?”

Of course, as ill luck would have it, there was a lull in the conversation, and it seemed to me that this unfortunate statement echoed round the room. All the company appeared to await my answer, and I was as red as a peony and covered with confusion; I wanted to cover her mistake, but could think of nothing for what seemed a long time, although in reality the pause was very slight before I said:

“Sheridan wrote *The School for Scandal*; he died before my father was born, but I knew his granddaughter, the Hon. Mrs. Norton; she was a very old lady when I knew her.”

“Ah, indeed,” said my neighbour in the coolest way—she had not turned a hair. “I read a great deal, but I never know who writes the books.”

A little more than a year ago another curious mistake occurred. I was at a large literary and journalistic soirée, and was talking to a lady, the wife of an editor of one of our great daily papers. We had only met twice before, and she was recalling this.

“I remember you quite well,” she said; “we met at the dinner of The Institute of Journalists—your name is Hain Friswell, and you are the daughter of Hans Christian Andersen.”

“You have made a mistake,” I replied. “Hans Andersen was never married.”

She looked at me quite resentfully, and tried to argue the point, and I left her only half convinced.

After my father's serious illness at Frampton Court he was delicate for a long time—in fact, he was never perfectly well again, and though he lived for eight years he was practically an invalid. In the summer of 1870 he took a small house at Bexley Heath, in Kent, and we divided our time between that place and London.

The little village of Bexley is on the loop line to Maidstone, a line that takes Time not by the forelock, but by the hindermost part, and never by any chance hurries itself; so, though only twelve miles from Charing Cross, it seems farther than Brighton, one is so long getting there: added to this Bexley itself is in a hollow, and is not considered so healthy as Bexley Heath, where people are said to live to a patriarchal old age. “The Heath,” as the inhabitants call it, is nearly two miles from Bexley, and to get there, either riding or walking, it is necessary to climb a very steep hill. When you are there the view over fourteen miles of country is very beautiful, but the Heath itself is an eyesore, a blot on the landscape—it consists of a medley of houses, shops, and St. John's Woodian villas, built along the Dover Road, one of the old Roman roads over which the coaches used to run when Bexley Heath was the

resort of highwaymen. Indeed, there are remarkable stories told to this day as to how the inhabitants of the Heath made their money. But that part of the Dover Road is like so many of our old Roman roads, now disfigured with tram lines and the hideous overhead wires. One almost wonders that the ghosts of passengers, drivers, guards, and highwaymen do not join issue and rise up in judgment at such sacrilege.

Our habitation was a low, double-fronted cottage standing in a beautiful and prolific garden, with trees which screened it from the road. My father called it "Bayard Cottage," and it still retains the name ; but when he took it it went by various names, and we were very much amused when we went shopping to find that our local habitation had no name of its own, but was always spoken of as "next door to Bullman's."

The inhabitants of Bexley Heath consisted at that time of middle-aged ladies and gentlemen who had avoided the married state, retired military men who grumbled at everything, and young married people wrapped up in themselves and their children. My eldest brother was with Mr. Norman Lockyer, and lived in town ; and we at Bexley Heath found that "happy village" deadly dull at times. Fortunately we were all fond of reading, writing, painting, music, and gardening, and we were much amused at the people who called upon us. Their ideas of artists,

authors, and actors were of the most crude kind ; they seemed to have the old-fashioned notion that they were "vagabonds." Like most of those who live in a narrow sphere, they understood little outside it, and they told some preposterous stories and made some wonderful statements.

I remember one of the autocrats of the Heath calling and making some astounding statements about William Morris, who had built a house in the place. His chief offence appeared to be having tea parties on Sunday. I was generally silent, but on this occasion I was roused, and was soon in dire disgrace for taking up the cudgels on his behalf. I said plainly, I thought Bexley Heath should be proud that such a man as the author of "The Earthly Paradise" had lived there. I was promptly told "little girls should be seen and not heard." This was adding insult to injury, for I was by no means a little girl. I can remember well my father's amused smile, which grew into a laugh when the lady asserted that she "had heard, and felt sure it must be true, that Mrs. Morris had been in a circus ; no one could ride and manage a horse so beautifully but a performer."

My father explained that this rumour was quite false, but the autocrat refused to be convinced, and said, "That was not the worst ; the man Morris was quite a heathen, for it was well known down there that he was married in his drawing-room, the ceremony being

of a most curious character, and afterwards he had it painted upon the wall."

This was such an astounding statement that we were very much puzzled, and asked ourselves what preposterous story had got about, and how had it been arrived at? It was some time before we discovered the origin.

The house Morris built was called the Red House. It stood in a quiet country road; was surrounded by a very high red-brick wall, in which were large, high wooden gates. The garden was not very extensive, and was very prim, the trees in some instances being cut into shapes. The house itself was substantial, but decidedly gloomy-looking; the windows were long and narrow, the roof very steep, and the chimneys charming. Inside it looked cold and gloomy, but when I went over the house it was empty. The rooms were lofty, the windows so high that no one could see out of them; there were red-brick hoods over the fireplaces, which consisted of a hearth and dogs; there were no stoves. In the drawing-room was a musicians' gallery, and round the walls were frescoes, one representing a mediæval marriage. This was the picture which had caused such silly stories to be spread abroad most likely by ignorant servants; but that people with any education or sense should repeat them was astounding.

CHAPTER XXIII

MY FATHER'S ILLNESS—RICE'S IDEA OF WIT—A RUSH FOR THE DOCTOR
—I GIVE MR. RICE A FRIGHT BY WAY OF REVENGE—ALONE AT
BAYARD COTTAGE.

MY father had taken Bayard Cottage by the year ; we therefore spent the summer out of town, but in the August of 1870 a novel of my father's (*One of Two*) began as a serial in *Once a Week*, and he had so much other work, he said he must come to London for a time. He therefore lent the cottage to a friend, and we all came up to town. My mother was much against this, as my father's health was so delicate she was always anxious about him, and took especial care that he should not take cold. She found that he was better in the purer and more invigorating air of Bexley Heath, where he had few friends, and there were neither theatres nor clubs to entice him out in the evening air.

Early in September our friend gave up Bayard Cottage, and my mother went down to see that it was ready for our occupation. The evening of the day my mother left Mr. Rice called, and I wished he had not, for I felt sure he would take my father to

a hot theatre or club, and there was the risk of his catching cold coming home. I have said that we all liked Mr. Rice very much ; he was an exceedingly pleasant man, but not one a girl would care to ask a favour of ; so it took some struggle for me to make up my mind to go out into the hall and speak to him before he went upstairs to the study. Directly I came into the hall the servant left, and after I had shaken hands with Mr. Rice I said :

“ If you please, if my father wants to go out, say you would rather not—say that you would rather stay in the study.”

Though Rice knew how ill my father had been, he evidently did not realise how delicate he was ; he therefore looked at me with what he considered a fascinating smile, and answered in this enigmatical manner :

“ Won't his mother let him out ? ”

I could make nothing of this speech. I supposed it was meant for a joke, but it appeared to me quite meaningless ; and so terribly in earnest was I that I grew hot with nervousness and anger, tears coming into my eyes, because I knew that I was being treated as a child—being laughed at, in fact. I drew myself up, and answered with dignity :

“ I do not in the least know what you mean, but I shall be obliged if you will do as I ask you. Hot rooms are bad for my father, and the wind is cold to-night.”

I thought this would settle the matter, but not a bit of it. Mr. Rice, still smiling, took out his large pocket-handkerchief with a flourish, and seemed to scatter *Ess Bouquet* all over the hall, while he said :

“And can't his mother trust him, then?”

For one moment I wondered if he were drunk, then I looked at him and replied angrily :

“Trust my father ! *What* do you mean ?”

“You would like to knock me down, I verily believe,” he murmured in an amused tone.

“If I were a man I would !” I retorted, as I looked him straight in the eyes and clenched my hands.

“Oh, you little spit-fire ! I believe you would, for you're not a bit like a girl.”

I left him to have the last word, which a man so dearly loves. With my head up I marched towards the dining-room, while he mounted the stairs very slowly, with many a backward look at me.

In about half an hour my father and Rice came down into the dining-room, where we were sitting. My father said they were going to the Savage Club. My grandmother murmured some remonstrance, but I spoke up, and said, “The wind is very cold.” I hoped Mr. Rice would have had the sense then to suggest staying in and playing cards ; but he said nothing, and only stood smiling at me. My father, with a laugh, told me not to put on such an anxious face—he *was all right*.

We spent anything but a pleasant evening, for I

could see my grandmother was very much worried. The next morning she told me she had been up half the night, my father's cough was so bad. At ten o'clock hæmorrhage came on and some one had to run for ice (we were short of a servant, the housemaid having gone for a fortnight's holiday). I had to go for a doctor, and I well remember running out of the house and down the street, struggling to get my arms into my jacket, and saying aloud, "It's come, it's come! it means death this time! O God, don't kill my father! don't let him die!"

I tore down the street, and reaching Southampton Row rushed at the first four-wheeler, trying with my weak hands to open the door, but I could not manage it. When the old driver came up and saw the state of mind I was in, he exclaimed:

"Why, missie, missie, whatever is the matter?"

"My father's dying!—put me in!" I cried, and he lifted me into the cab. I gave him the address.

"Drive as fast as ever you can!" I said.

"All right—don't take on so, missie," he replied as he banged the door. He scrambled on to the box, and away we went at a gallop.

I had never been in a cab by myself in my life. I was so alarmed about my father that for the first few moments I could not see, and then when I looked out of the window I failed in my excitement to recognise the streets and houses. I knew the way quite well, but in my hurry it seemed twice as long—was the

cabman taking me wrongly? Should I find myself in some slum? If I did not return, what would my grandmother do?—would she send for the nearest doctor, and so not let my father die? Oh, I hoped and prayed she would! I felt as if I must open the cab door and jump out; I thought of rapping at the glass and shouting at the cabman, but what good would it do? I knew I had worked myself into a frenzy, and so I sat still, with my hands and teeth clenched, until we stopped at the doctor's door. The old cabman thundered at it, while I, with great perseverance, opened the cab door, then jumped out, rushed right past the cabman and servant, straight into the consulting-room.

"Come at once—my father's dying!" I said, seizing the doctor's hand.

Mr. Sellwood was a little man, with iron-grey hair which stood almost on end. He had known me since childhood. He wore spectacles, and he glanced at me from over the top of his glasses, saying:

"Nonsense—nothing of the sort," in the most determined tone; then he added severely, "Just sit down and calm yourself; and now tell me all about it."

His tone had calmed me, and I was able to give him a clear account. As I talked he washed his hands and collected several things which he put into a little black bag; then he made me drink some wine, and

taking my hand led me out to the cab. He gave the man the address.

"Drive like the wind!" was all he said as he got in.

I think Mr. Rice was troubled about my father, for later that morning he came to see how he was.

"He is not very well," I said calmly, but I did not tell him that he was in bed; my father had expressed a wish to see him if he called, and I merely asked Mr. Rice to go up to his room. He went, but returned in about ten minutes looking ghastly. He sank into a chair and asked for some water. I rang for some; I thought he would have fainted. I sat and watched him, but said nothing. For some time he could not speak; when he could he murmured some excuse for the trouble he was giving me, and said:

"I cannot endure the sight of blood—it always turns me."

Still I did not speak; I was glad he had had such a fright, I thought it served him right. Finding I would not speak, he said, in a pathetic tone:

"Oh, Miss Friswell, do you think this my fault?"

"Why did you take him out last night?" I asked severely.

"I did not propose it," he replied.

"But you never tried to prevent his going, as I asked you."

"Then you think I *am* to blame? You are cruel."

Mr. Rice looked so pale and spoke so earnestly I began to feel sorry for him.

"If your father dies, you will put his death at my door," he continued.

"I suppose he would have had this attack," I said reluctantly; "but it was a bad night, and then you need not have insinuated that my father drank."

Rice gazed at me in horrified amazement. "I never thought of such a thing," he said; "your father is a most abstemious man."

"Then what *did* you mean?" I asked earnestly, and Mr. Rice was obliged to explain that he was only joking, and that "won't his mother let him out?" and "can't she trust him, then?" were catch phrases at one time.

He looked very contrite and so hurt at my not understanding his jokes that I there and then gave him a pot of Morella cherry jam, which was to have been sent to him, as it was something of which he was very fond, and was made of the Bayard Cottage cherries. He carried it away as a peace offering.

That same afternoon my brother and I went to Bexley Heath to send up my mother. I think we did our best to cheer her; but when she had started and the carriage was out of sight, how melancholy we were! We were very young, and complete cockneys—we were all alone, and knew little of the people or the place.

CHAPTER XXIV

J. S. RICE AS AN EDITOR—THE OFFICES OF "ONCE A WEEK"—A RECIPE FOR FALLING HAIR—"THE MORTIMERS"—A WONDERFUL REVIEW—MR. RICE'S DELIGHT THEREAT—RICE ON LITERARY WOMEN.

MR. RICE had bought *Once a Week*, and appeared to be editor, proprietor, staff, and manager, all in his own person. We were not so Americanised in the seventies as we are now, but were more quiet and less pretentious. Newspaper offices were not ornamented outside and on the staircases with coloured tiles, reminding one of public-houses. The offices of weekly papers were not palatial, nor were there Oriental carpets, modern Chippendale and Queen Anne furniture, as one sees now. Typewriting and its attendant nymphs were unknown, or I am sure Mr. Rice would have had a staff; but I do not think he would have consented to their adapting other people's ideas, and making patchwork novels for his paper, as some firms are so strongly suspected of doing now. *Grammar*, if not style, was considered then, and proprietors of papers thought something of the prestige of their paper; they took a certain amount of pride in having good, well-written stories

and articles, and did not go in so much for the "cheap and nasty"—in fact, they prided themselves on knowing and getting a good thing when they saw it. They were more artistic and less commercial; they were not slaves to show, and did not think so much of fine buildings, servants in livery, motor-cars, and other luxuries; and this being so, the papers were not turned and twisted and spoilt because their owners only thought of the large incomes to be squeezed out of them.

But we are told there is a happy medium in all things, which Mr. Rice evidently did not believe; for, in spite of his fashionable dress, he was very careful of his money, and the offices of *Once a Week*, which were in Tavistock Street, Covent Garden, were dismal in the extreme. From the street you entered a small shop, which was very neat and tidy, the paper being piled on shelves, while a youth of twelve stood, not in a glass cage, but behind a small counter, and politely asked you your business. Having stated your wish to see the editor, he did not thrust a small printed form beneath your nose, and request you to write your name and business, but, after saying "I will see if he is disengaged," he came from behind the counter and went to a door opposite the shop door, and disappeared, reappearing after a few moments to show you into the editor's sanctum. There, in a small, dreary back room, whose walls were lined with pigeon-holes full of dusty, yellow papers, and whose

window looked into a suicidal backyard, sat Mr. Rice at a table, with a blotting pad and pen and ink before him. Though I called several times with my father, I never saw him writing, reading, or with any papers lying about, as though he had been busy.

We sat upon cane chairs of the plainest description, and while my father and the editor talked I contemplated those yellow, dusty piles of manuscript. When had they been written? Who had written them?—and how long had they been there? Were they accepted, or rejected “addresses”?—who could tell? Did Mr. Rice read them? Somehow I could not imagine his doing so.

One day when we went in the editor was very melancholy. We thought the sale of the paper had suddenly stopped—but no; his hair was “getting thin on the top, and he had only discovered it that morning! Could my father tell him what to do?” My father, with the most solemn face, gave him a wonderful recipe, in which cayenne pepper, cod liver oil, paraffin, and many other incongruous things, were mixed. Before writing it down, Mr. Rice looked from my father to me; but I was equal to the occasion, and never smiled. Afterwards I made my father laugh, by saying disgustedly, “Fancy thinking of your *hair*, when there are *manuscripts* to read!” Mr. Rice always declared he tried the mixture; he certainly published the recipe in *Ready Money Mortiboy*.

I could never imagine Mr. Rice as an editor, and

certainly not as an author ; he seemed to me to belong to the City and the Stock Exchange, of which he was so fond of talking. I did not know then that he would become one of our most successful novelists, nor that he would honour me so far as to make me (so I was told on very good authority) the model of two of his heroines—Phillis, in *The Golden Butterfly*, and Laura Collingwood, in *My Little Girl*. Such is the ingratitude of woman, especially of a young woman—I read the books, but did not feel at all flattered ! I did not think that either of these heroines was particularly well drawn—they both seemed to me so simple, not to say stupid. I hoped I had not given people such an idea of simplicity, and so I said to Mrs. McCarthy, who was my authority. She laughed, and replied :

“You are the most simple, down-right girl I know ; and Mr. Rice tells me that, with the exception of making your hair dark brown, and your eyes brown, the description of Phillis in *The Golden Butterfly* is you to the life ; why, in both books even your dress is described—do you mean to say you don’t know it ? ”

“I should not have noticed it, had you not told me.”

“Then Rice need not have been afraid,” said Mrs. McCarthy, with a laugh ; “and now do you feel complimented ? ”

“I never whistled a tune in my life—I can only whistle a dog,” I said resentfully ; “and I learnt to read so long ago I can’t remember it,”

Mrs. McCarthy laughed again.

"So that is it—you resent Phillis's late education ; but, my dear child, a novelist must make his heroine peculiar in something ; of course she is not an exact copy of you—almost, not quite. You can't whistle, she can ; but then see what a mimic you are, so is Phillis ; and you are so independent—more like a boy than a girl, Mr. Rice says."

"So he told me, once," I replied, and added, "I wish to goodness I was more like other girls—I do try to be."

"Then for mercy's sake don't!" was Mrs. McCarthy's smiling reply.

Mr. Rice's first novel appeared in *Once a Week*, and was called *The Mortimers, A Novel with Two Heroes*. It is illustrated by H. K. Browne, and is not a particularly well-written story. Many of the pictures, and not a few of the scenes, have a strong Dickensy flavour about them. In neither one case nor the other is this remarkable, as "Phiz" (H. K. Browne) illustrated *Pickwick*, and Rice was a great admirer of the novelist, and his sense of humour was decidedly Dickensian. In *Mr. Golightly, the Adventures of an Amiable Man*, one can see a likeness to *Verdant Green*, and this I remarked when I reviewed it on its appearance in book form.

It came out in 1871, and the title was somewhat changed, it being called *The Cambridge Freshman, or the Memoirs of Mr. Golightly*, by Martin Legrand.

My father did not wish to review the book ; and as at that time I sometimes acted as his secretary, he gave a copy to me and said :

“Read this, and write down just what you think of it, clearly and concisely.”

It was my first attempt at reviewing ; I was rather appalled at the importance of my office, but I did my best. My father found no fault, except telling me I must not make jokes ; but as the remark was rather witty he would let it stand, though I was to remember that reviewing books was too important a matter to joke over ; but he looked so amused when he said this that I thought him only half in earnest.

I have part of the review before me now, for Mr. Rice was so mightily pleased with it he put it first of all those quoted from the Press ; but, unfortunately, he has left out the joke, and I cannot recall it ; I only know it was something about St. Martin's Le Grand, a play upon the author's pen name. His pleasure was genuine, for he did not know who wrote the review ; and how I came to witness his delight was due to my father, who brought him into the drawing-room, one afternoon, where I sat at work.

“I have been telling your father, Miss Friswell, what a good review I have had in the ——. It is so well written I made sure I had to thank him for it, but he tells me I have not, and I am rather glad, for it's doubly good to get a review like this from a stranger ; it was something in the style made me

think it your father's, but so many people imitate him now—not that they succeed, they flounder egregiously.”

Mr. Rice seemed excited and restless, and walked about as he talked, while my father sat and looked at the fire with a smile on his face.

“You are sure you did not write it?” said Mr. Rice, pausing close to me, but addressing my father.

“Quite sure,” returned my father, looking very much amused; but as he always had a very bright and cheerful expression, the merriment in his eyes roused no suspicion in the breast of the novelist.

“Sit down, sit down, Rice, and read us this wonderful review.”

“Would you really like me to?” exclaimed Rice boyishly, his face quite beaming with pleasure.

“Of course,” said my father, “of course.”

Mr. Rice put his hand into his pocket and drew out a very smart pocket-book, and opening it took out the review, returning the book to his breast-pocket.

“Glad to see you wear it next your heart,” said my father; “it should be written by a young lady.”

“A woman!” returned Rice in a contemptuous tone; “no woman could have written *this*—when did you find a woman with a sense of humour, or who would appreciate it? Now *Golightly* is a humorous book; a woman would not have seen it, or if she had would have written something scathing. But the

reviewer actually makes a joke ; that in itself is a proof it is not written by a woman—don't you think so ? ”

My father shrugged his shoulders, and gave me a merry look, which I was afraid Rice would see. I felt rather indignant with the novelist, for he always had something to say against women, and I should have liked to take up the cudgels in their favour and cry aloud, “A girl wrote the review you think so fine—a girl who is not considered in the least clever” ; but I knew my father would not wish me to tell him, that if it was to be told he would do so himself. While I was thinking Mr. Rice was reading my review, laying particular stress on some of the passages that he thought were like my father's. When he had finished he said almost defiantly :

“I consider that a well-written and just review. That passage about the new author seeking to do for his generation what Cuthbert Bede did for his is good and true. I don't think much of the joke about St. Martin's Le Grand, but reviewers will try to be facetious, and—well, it's not so bad, it's rather witty ; but what I like best is, you can see the critic has read the book.”

“Yes,” said my father, tapping the fingers of one hand upon the knuckles of the other. “Yes, I should say the book has been read.”

“And by a 'Varsity man too.”

"I should not like to say that," replied my father, with a reflective shake of his head.

"But I'm pretty certain of it. My first idea was that it was you because of the style, but now I think it's one of the clever young men who come up from Oxford and Cambridge; there are so many now in journalism."

"Yes, worse luck!" interjected my father.

"Ah, but they would understand a book of this kind; it would appeal to them, as it would not and could not to others—to the same extent, of course, I mean—and that's why a woman could *not* have written this."

"I don't see that, Mr. Rice," I ventured.

"Don't you? But you don't know much about literary women, do you?"

Before I could answer he continued: "Literary women! I abhor them! They are as plain as can be, and their natures have been warped and soured because men will not notice them."

My father laughed aloud, while I was too astonished to speak; when I found my voice I began indignantly:

"Literary women are *not* ugly—Mrs. Lynn Linton isn't——"

"No, but she—she has no husband," returned Mr. Rice.

"All people don't want husbands," I retorted. "Besides, that's nothing to do with it; women *can* be

pretty and clever—it's nonsense to think that women who write are ugly and slovenly in their dress. Writing is a gift, and——"

"Don't you take to it, you are far too pretty," returned Mr. Rice hastily.

"That's just the kind of horrid, unjust, and absurd speech——" I began, when my father rose, and putting his hand on Rice's shoulder, said :

"You have done it now—you had better come into the study with me."

I knew from my father's manner that he did not wish Mr. Rice to know who had written the review, and was afraid I was going to confess.

"Won't you congratulate me? This is the very best review I've ever had," said Rice.

"Oh, I do ; but I believe a woman wrote it," I added mischievously.

Mr. Rice shook his head, and gave me a look as if he pitied my ignorance ; and then the door closed upon me, and I was left to enjoy a hearty laugh.

Rice never discovered the authorship of that review, for my father, who had meant to tell him, that we might all laugh together, when he found how much he thought of it, refrained from doing so—but I had many a temptation when I heard literary women sneered at.

CHAPTER XXV

SIR WALTER BESANT—THE INCORPORATED SOCIETY OF AUTHORS—
I JOIN THE AUTHORS' SOCIETY—AN INTERVIEW WITH BESANT—
HE DISCOURSES ON HIS FAVOURITE TOPIC—"THE GENTLE LIFE"—
AND ITS PUBLISHERS—A LETTER FROM LADY LYTTON.

REMINISCENCES of J. S. Rice naturally remind me of Sir Walter Besant—older, more practical, and even more level-headed, I should say. Though Mr. Rice gave me the idea of not being very poetical or imaginative in the days when I knew him, yet I have heard it said that most of what there is of poetry and humour in the Rice and Besant novels was due to him.

Sir Walter Besant will not, perhaps, go down to posterity as a great novelist, but rather as a philanthropist—the friend of the poor, and especially of the poor literary man; and this will be greater fame; for great as it is to be the master of your art, I think it is even greater to be the promoter of two such institutions as The Incorporated Society of Authors and the People's Palace.

Speaking of the Authors' Society, it is no small thing to start a society for the benefit of people in your own class. So much is done for the "poor,"

so little for the great middle class—thousands of whom have a very hard struggle to make a living at all, thousands of whom exist in penury, if not in absolute want; and no one knows, nor cares, because the gently nurtured amongst the middle class are independent, and do not grab all they can like some of the rich, nor fawn and whine as do so many of the lower class; yet theirs is often the harder fate, for being between the two stools they not infrequently come to the ground.

The troubles and quarrels of authors have filled books, for the position of literary people has always been most unsatisfactory; therefore it is no wonder that murmurs of discontent were always to be heard. That discontent, as Sir Walter Besant says in his autobiography, “may be traced back, for a hundred and fifty years, simply by the continuous, beaded string of epigrams in which they have relieved their angry souls.” To break out into epigram may be clever and amusing, but it is not so businesslike as starting a Society with these three objects: (1) The maintenance, definition, and defence of literary copyright; (2) the consolidation and amendment of the laws of domestic copyright; (3) the promotion of international copyright. This was the intention the Authors' Society started with; and though it was hoped it would not cause offence, it certainly did so, in the minds of many publishers, and even of authors themselves.

I was born and bred within a literary circle, and had heard much of the sharpness of publishers (not from my father, who had quite an affection for S. Low & Co.) and the poverty of authors ; and still it seemed to me, from what I had heard and seen, that authors worked as hard as, or harder than, others, and yet were treated so differently. One of the things I could never understand was why people should expect an author to give away his books ; and even seem to think that they were paying the author compliments by asking for copies of his works ; yet not one of these same people would have thought of asking a merchant friend for a bale of cloth, or a doctor to visit him for nothing. But there was a silly feeling that it was beneath the dignity of letters to go into the business side of the question. Authors and their families were, I believe, supposed to live on flattery and fame ; but if so, it was a very poor living, for fame never paid butcher, baker, or tax-gatherer, and I never knew a tradesman go without his money for the honour and glory of serving Mr. So-and-so, the well-known novelist. A doctor, barrister, actor, or indeed any member of the other professions, was not considered mean and grasping, nor was he reproached, for looking after the business side of his profession, and growing rich if he could ; but, to quote again Sir Walter Besant, "if for a moment any author begins to make a practical investigation into the monetary value of the work

he puts upon the market, a hundred voices arise, even from those of his own craft, as well as from those that live by administering his property." This arises from a confusion of ideas. There are two values in literary work, which cannot be considered together: the first is the artistic value, which has to do with the construction, accuracy, and style of the work, and on this the author's literary reputation depends; but it is quite apart from the second, the monetary value—in fact, in these days especially, it is not always the literary masterpiece that sells; and as publishers and editors are prone to look at literary work merely from the monetary point of view, the unfortunate author who has to live by his pen is told that he must write "what the people like"—which, by the way, is not necessarily what the people like, but what the editor, or the manager of a limited company, thinks they like, or can buy cheaply, and can manage by advertisement to force down the unsuspecting Public's throat.

I have heard publishers complain that authors "are too sharp now," and there is no doubt that some writers get very high prices indeed; but it is only in a few cases, and does not alter the fact that authorship is very precarious and badly paid. Besides this, the legitimate author now has to contend with all sorts and conditions of people who rush into the profession. There are the titled people whose restlessness *must* find a vent; there are the rich women, generally the wives

and daughters of bankers, judges, or members of Parliament, who delight to show their culture and learning (?) by writing articles in the daily papers, and weekly or monthly magazines—such articles! A rich, titled woman is of course quite competent to tell the small housewife how to manage her “general,” “how to keep house on £100 a year,” or “how to marry on five and twenty shillings a week.” These “curiosities of literature” would be very entertaining reading, if they did not remind one of how the Press has fallen, and of how the large army of amateurs has come in and helped to swamp the market.

Most of our great authors have written to provide themselves with the necessities of life; but the art of writing, as I understand it, is not to let this necessity to live by one's books become too apparent; for a true artist, while he is writing, thinks only of his work, and not of what it will fetch; yet, when the book is once finished, it is foolish if the author does not turn into the man of business, for if he does not, and is not acquainted with some idea of its monetary value, he will probably be over-reached—and it is here that the Authors' Society steps in and helps those who will apply for its able and efficient aid.

My first introduction to Sir Walter Besant was through the Authors' Society. Soon after it was started, I wrote to ask what kind of Society it

was. Mr. Besant, as he was then, very kindly answered me, and also informed me that he had nominated me as a member. I felt it was a great honour, and one that I little deserved; nor was I at all sure that I wished to be a member, for I had abandoned "the thorny path of literature" for the equally prickly one of marriage; and as I had very strict ideas upon the duty of a wife, I was immersed in domestic affairs, which means I did, as so many of us much abused women do, nearly all my own work, and stayed at home in the exemplary manner (so men tell us) of our grandmothers. I do not quite believe about our grandmothers' self-sacrifice; I know some who have had much more cheerful lives than their descendants—but that is not on the *tapis* just now.

I did not know what to do about the Authors' Society; I had written at my husband's suggestion, but I was not sure that he would approve of my joining anything that was in the nature of a club, for so I understood the Society to be. However, when I spoke to him about it he urged me to go and see Mr. Besant, and I went.

The offices of the Authors' Society were then in Portugal Street, Lincoln's Inn, and there, in a pleasant room on the second floor, I found a short, sturdy man, with iron-grey hair and beard, a bright complexion, and most kindly eyes, which beamed at me through gold-rimmed spectacles; such was Besant.

Before I entered his room I had paid my guinea to Squire Sprigge, who was solemnity and politeness personified, and who impressed upon me the honour I had had conferred on me. I felt duly impressed, and so when I entered Mr. Besant's presence I was not so cheerful as before my interview with Squire Sprigge ; I felt nervous, and began to wish I had not come, and that I was not a member of the Authors' Society.

But Besant's pleasant manner soon reassured me. He shook me heartily by the hand, said he "had only once or twice seen my father, but he knew his books well, as who did not ? that he had heard of me, indeed of us all, from Mr. Rice." He then began talking of *The Gentle Life Series*, of their great success—"phenomenal for books of essays," he added. He asked if I could give him any information as to the number that had been published ; I said I could not ; he then suggested my asking S. Low & Co.

There was no Sampson Low then. The old gentleman, whom I remember as a tall, kindly old man, was dead ; so were his sons. Mr. William Low, the only one I knew well, was a man I always liked—he seemed so straightforward and sincere ; but the Lows were not, it would seem, a very strong family, for Sampson Low, Junr., was an invalid and always lived at Brighton, and William Low was a martyr to headache.

Besant asked me to get for him some statistics of the sale of *The Gentle Life** from Mr. Edward Marston,

* The first volume of the *Series*.

for he was amazed to hear from me that my father received only seventy-five pounds for the copyright.

“Do you mean to say that the firm never gave your father anything more—not when they found what a great success it was? Why, it has sold like a spelling book for over thirty years!” said Besant, with great emphasis, his bright, keen eyes fixed on my face.

I told him that when Queen Victoria so much admired the book that by her permission and desire an edition was dedicated to her, some essays were taken from the first two volumes and called “The Queen’s Edition,” and Messrs. S. Low & Co. and my father shared equally the profits on that edition, which did not, however, sell like the first two books of the Series.

Besant reflected a moment, and said, “When your father died, did they do nothing then?”

“No,” I replied, rather astonished at his vehemence : “you see my father sold the copyright.”

“Oh, they were not obliged to, I know ; but the Lows have made a fortune by that one book alone ;* don’t you realise that?”

* *The Gentle Life Series* was translated into several languages, while the first two volumes were bound in a special binding for the Army and Navy. I have heard Mr. Sampson Low himself say that these two books must have materially helped to advertise the publishing firm all over the British Empire ; and yet when Mr. Marston wrote an account of his house in *The Publisher’s Circular*, some few years ago, and gave a list of his authors, he strangely left out the name of the author of *The Gentle Life*, who must have brought them so much custom.

"Yes," I said; then I added, "I think publishers are like butchers and bakers—they make their good customers pay for their bad."

Besant did not smile; he looked very serious.

There was silence for some moments, and then I said, "We did not expect anything from them, all we wanted was the books well advertised, but they never advertised them enough, and when, shortly after my father's death, I went with my mother and suggested their putting advertisements into various papers one of the partners asked me if I would have them advertise *The Gentle Life Series* as if it were Pears' Soap or Holloway's Pills."

"And what did you say?"

"Yes, certainly; that was what I called advertising."

"Quite right," said Besant; "it will come to it yet."

We then talked about Mr. Rice, of whose family Besant seemed to know little, for he asked if we knew his mother or any member of his family. I said we did not, and then he remarked, "What a curiously reticent man he was!" He told me about his death, and spoke very nicely of him; and when I rose to go he again urged me to get him statistics of the sales of *The Gentle Life Series*, and spoke very strongly on the subject. I tried to make excuses, and as Besant shook hands he said:

"What a friend you are to publishers!" and then he added sarcastically and somewhat bitterly, "I am glad you are so fond of them."

I made no reply, but as I went downstairs I wondered if I had offended Mr. Besant by trying to say what I could on the other side. No one knew better than I, who had, as Mr. Whiteing once graphically put it, "been born in the purple," how hard authors work, how small their profits.

But here I had better explain to the uninitiated that *The Gentle Life Series* is a "collection of essays on the formation of character," brought out in several books. Four large editions of the first volume in its six-shilling form were sold in the first four years, and this was an unprecedented success for a book of essays, especially in those days, when the reading public, though more educated and refined, was not so large as now. To my father the sale was of little pecuniary advantage, for he sold the copyright—not at first, but when the book had begun to sell to an extent he could not have realised—the publishers, Messrs. Sampson Low & Co., paying the small sum of seventy-five pounds for it.

When I published the Memoir of my father, I wrote to Mr. Marston and asked him for statistics of the sale of *The Gentle Life*. He kindly answered me to the effect that some books he had kept for about forty years had, "in the choppings and changings of this mortal life," disappeared, "and it is in these that the first arrangements with your father are recorded."

As *The Gentle Life Series* sold for over thirty years,

and the first volume was in its thirty-eighth edition in 1892, it would have been interesting to know how many went to an edition, especially as I was informed by a well-known bookseller and publisher that they regularly stocked the Series by the thousand.

There is nothing morbid or weakly religious in *The Gentle Life Series*; all the books are strong and manly, while there breathes a spirit of hope, common sense, cheerfulness, and love of humanity, which is very characteristic of all my father's work. Kingsley, in a letter to him, remarks upon this. He says: "I am glad to find you are a man. Men who care for the gentle life, without being superstitious or hysterical, are growing more and more rare." My father was essentially—what people called the Canon—"a muscular Christian." He hated all sham, hypocrisy, and snob-bishness. Queen Victoria, in a letter to my father, said she wished the essay on "The Servants within our Gates" could be written in letters of gold, and read by all her subjects. Lady Lytton, the wife of Lord Lytton, the novelist, writes as follows:

"There can be no doubt that if we English ever did consider the feelings of others, I should evince my gratitude to you for the delightful, evenly delightful week you have enabled me to pass. First, by renewing my acquaintance with your most charming *Gentle Life*, which ought not to be an Elzevir Edition, but one printed in golden type. Oh! how true is all you say upon 'Gentility'—it *is the* curse and canker of

this country, and the eternal straining of all classes to be what the lower and middle orders elegantly term ‘genteel,’ that makes the English the most vulgar and vulgar-minded people in the whole world. I quite agree, both with you and Victor Hugo, upon the perniciousness of success ; still, I think it very ungrateful, both of you and of him, to promulgate this axiom, seeing what immortal crowns that god of this world has woven for you both.”

CHAPTER XXVI

A DINNER AT THE AUTHORS' SOCIETY—I FIRST SEE SIR H. M. STANLEY—
HOW I WISHED HE HAD NOT FOUND LIVINGSTONE—MY LAST
INTERVIEW WITH SIR WALTER BESANT—HIS ADVICE ON NOVEL
WRITING.

IT was at the Annual Dinner of the Authors' Society that I first saw H. M. Stanley. He was standing quietly at the side of his wife, who was talking to some friends, and who looked a head and shoulders taller than he—indeed, she seemed quite to overshadow the little, great man, while the author of *Esther Waters* (George Moore), whom I very much wished to see, stood near, looming large and fair, with a great avalanche of white shirt front, hands thrust in pockets, and a cynical smile on his bright red lips. Not far from the group was the new-made Sir Walter and his son.

It was after dinner ; the heat was excessive. There was a regular babel of sound, for every one was talking, it seemed to me, but Stanley and myself. He was looking decidedly bored, and I was watching him. I looked at the red-faced, white-haired little man with a mixture of admiration, amusement, and pity—he

seemed so out of place. His bored glance wandered from the different groups, scarcely resting a moment on any one, and yet his eyes would pause now and then (fine eyes they were, and keen) as if he were making mental notes, as no doubt he was, of the scene and the people.

I looked at him so earnestly that twice his eyes met mine, and in another moment I should have introduced myself to him, for I should have liked to tell him an amusing story ; but as I hesitated I lost him, for Lady Stanley made her adieus, and like a good and affectionate husband he followed in her wake. First I was disappointed that I had not gone up to him, that I had never shaken him by the hand, never let him know how much perplexity and weary work his first book gave me. Then I felt glad—perhaps my story would not have pleased him ; and yet I think he would have laughed, had he known that when first my eyes rested on his familiar face, I said to myself :

“ Ah, so there you are, Mr. Stanley ; I see you at last in the flesh, and I have a bone to pick with you. I am glad you are married and settled down, and enjoying a well-earned rest, and I hope you will live long, after all you have been through. You are a very wonderful man ; I wonder what you are thinking of now. Is it of your meeting with that great man Livingstone, or is it of Darkest Africa—that awful forest, of those pigmy men and women ? Do we literary people, who think so much of ourselves, seem

pigmies to you? No, I don't think we do; I fancy you are a little bit afraid of us, and a great deal bored by us."

Here Stanley looked at me as if I had spoken, and Sir Walter Besant, following his gaze, looked at me also, and immediately turned his head another way; and at that I asked myself, "Does he think I am going to ask him to introduce me to Stanley?—as if I had not every right to speak to him and to introduce myself if I chose, considering the trouble I had with his dreadful manuscript."

Then the years rolled back, and I saw, as in a vision, a very good-looking, grey-haired man turning over a bulky manuscript, which was written in a small, rather cramped hand, and corrected in many places; I saw a tall girl standing at his side.

"This," said the grey-haired man, laying his hand on the manuscript and looking at the girl, "is Stanley's great book, *How I found Livingstone*. Low & Co. are going to bring it out, but Marston writes me that it wants great revising, that it will never do as it is; and he's about right there—it's not well written, it's ungrammatical, and ill-spelt. I fear it will be a great task."

"The handwriting is not very legible," said the girl.

"That is a small matter compared with others. It is wanted in a hurry; I wrote to say I would not undertake it, but Marston says I am the only man they care to ask. Now what I want you to do is to read

it carefully through, and correct all the grammar and spelling.”

The girl bent over the manuscript and read out a few sentences ; then she stood up and looked at her father.

“Can’t you send it back?” she said.

“I want to oblige the publishers ; besides, they will pay well—I shall charge a hundred pounds.”

The girl took up the manuscript with a faint sigh, and, going to the other side of the table, commenced her task. She was considered a champion grammarian at school, but was always in hot water over her spelling. She had her own original way, and so had H. M. Stanley ; and what with hers and Stanley’s, she had endless recourse to the dictionary, till between the three she was so hopelessly befogged and muddled, that she has never quite recovered, and does not know how to spell to this day.

She wrestled with the grammar, spelling, and composition of that book for many days—in fact, till the days ran into weeks ; but even then it was quickly done. Once she lost patience, and, feeling a grudge against Stanley, *The New York Herald*, and Livingstone, she flung the manuscript across the table, exclaiming, “I wish he’d never found Livingstone !”

Her father laughed. “Others have said they don’t believe he is found,” he said.

“I don’t believe he wanted to be,” returned the girl, and, though a girl no longer, she still retains that opinion.

My father often saw Stanley, and liked him. All the proofs of that book passed through mine and my father's hands. There is an entry in his diary on Monday, September 2nd, 1872: "Go to meet Stanley. Read proofs of his book." The manuscript was greatly cut and altered, and when it came out the critics were, I believe, somewhat surprised at the clear, concise style in which it was written; they would have spoken differently had they read, as I did, the manuscript.

The last time I saw Sir Walter Besant was at Messrs. A. & C. Black's, in Soho Square, not long before his death. I had written a letter to *The Author* on "Piracy," as a number of letters on the subject were appearing at that time in the Society's Journal. I had been very much victimised, especially as regards children's stories, and I had given some of my experiences. My letter was not put in, as Sir Walter had been advised to stop the correspondence, but he asked me to come and see him and give him the exact details. So I found myself one sunny afternoon sitting in the old-fashioned window seat in Messrs. Black's shop, glancing through some books, and looking up every now and then at the plaster cast of a statue of Sir Walter Scott. There he sat, looking perpetually calm and untroubled; but how hard he worked, what a harassing time he had when his publishers fell into difficulties, and what a fine sense of honour! Was there an author living who

would have done the same? I thought there were several; my father certainly would, and so would have Sir Walter Besant. As I sat thinking of the first Sir Walter, the second came in and passed slowly by the statue and up the stairs. With a shock I realised that he looked much older and greyer than when I had seen him last; but I knew he had not been well, and I hoped he would recover his alert, bright manner as the weather became finer, for I did not know the cause of his illness.

In a few moments I was shown into his room, and sitting by his desk I gave him the details for which he asked; then we talked of the Authors' Society and the Authors' Club. I told him that women should belong to the latter, as there should be no sex in literature. He quite agreed, but said it had been put forward before the Club was started, and it was thought that the subscription was too heavy for literary women. I said I had seen something of the sort in *The Author*, and thought it a singular idea; I also remarked that the entrance fee and subscription should not be too heavy for either men or women, for literary people were not rich as a class.

"But men are paid in that, as in everything, much better than women," said Sir Walter.

I knew this was true, but felt annoyed, for it is so scandalously unfair, and I said so.

"It is the same in Government offices, and every-

where : women are underpaid—they can live on less than men.”

“Because they are less extravagant than men, it is no reason why they should take less money for the same work, especially as I have heard it said that they often do their work more conscientiously.”

Sir Walter admitted he had heard the same thing, but that did not do away with the fact that women were underpaid.

“It only aggravates it,” I returned, and then I said that the Authors’ Club could not be considered a representative club when it excluded women from its membership. To this he agreed, and said he had thought the same, but there were difficulties ; however, he “was glad to hear a woman’s views on the subject and he would see what arrangement could be made ; for, as the Authors’ Club was an offshoot of the Society, it certainly should admit the women members.”

We then talked of novels, of the difficulties young authors have of getting a publisher to take them up, and the curious way readers have of overlooking good books—or so it would seem, from the stories one hears of such books as *Vanity Fair* being rejected five or six times. He told me Rice and he published *Ready Money Mortiboy* themselves, and he spoke very highly of a Mr. Burghley, a publisher to whom he advised me to go if I wanted to publish a novel. He gave me much good and kindly advice, and said :

"You *can* write, and well. Put plenty of love in your stories : novels are principally written for and read by women, and women like it—they can't do without it." He paused and looked at me, but as I did not speak, he said, "Now don't you think so?"

I did not think so, and do not now ; but I did not say so. I said :

"You agree with Byron, that 'Love is of man's life a thing apart ; 'tis woman's whole existence'?"

"Yes," he replied, "yes, I think that is true, and if, as you say, you are writing for a living, you must put plenty of love in your stories."

"It is the part I like writing least."

"And reading most?" he added.

I laughed.

"Ah! Now you are convicted, and now you will admit that women cannot do without love—it is their sole existence."

I had risen to go ; we were both standing, and I hesitated ; there was so much I should have liked to say on the subject, but I was afraid of taking up Sir Walter's time, and I had another appointment, so I only smiled and held out my hand to say good-bye. Sir Walter Besant shook hands in his sincere and hearty manner, and accompanied me to the door. His last words were :

"Mind, plenty of love in it, plenty of love."

CHAPTER XXVII

WE GO TO LIVE AT BEXLEY HEATH—REMINISCENCES OF ARTEMUS WARD
—JOSEPH HATTON—ARTHUR SKETCHLEY—SARAH BERNHARDT'S
EXHIBITION IN PICCADILLY—A FASHIONABLE WEDDING—GLADSTONE
AND SIR WILLIAM HARCOURT.

WHEN we finally settled at Bexley Heath my father seldom went to town except on business, or to some literary dinner, and my mother, who cared little for society, and who was always anxious about my father's health, practically gave up visiting. This was very unfortunate for a girl on the verge of womanhood, and I began to find life in the country very dull indeed. To us young people it was social banishment, and very hard to bear, especially as I was not allowed to wander about the woods, fields, and lanes by myself, and was told, if I grumbled, that it would not be safe, and I must be content with the garden.

How I missed Mr. and Mrs. McCarthy, their young people, and their pleasant At Homes! How I missed our own parties and our cheerful five o'clock teas, at which some author or actor used to drop in daily! How we all missed the visits of Irving, Creswick,

Joseph Hatton, E. P. Hingston, Rice, and others ! Joseph Hatton was then a young author, full of enthusiasm, and had just published his novel *Clytie*, which was very successful. He was a good-looking man, with plenty of push and go in him ; I think his first novel was one called *Bitter Sweets*, for I have a letter before me in which he speaks of my father's sympathy with him over the treatment which the book received "at the hands of a certain critic on a well-known literary journal." Mr. Hatton says "it could only be the offspring of spite." My father had suffered from the same critic, for the letter congratulates him on "taking the bull by the horns, and fighting him so thoroughly, ably, and successfully."

Mr. E. P. Hingston was a great friend of Artemus Ward's ; he had become acquainted with the humorist in America, and liked him so much that he became his business manager. Hingston was a very pleasant, genial man, short of stature, and with a long brown beard. The first evening he spent with us he taught us to play "Poker," and he told us many funny stories of Mr. Charles Browne (Artemus Ward), of whose singular humour, originality of style, and eccentric spelling every one was then talking.

Artemus Ward himself was a tall, thin man, with a well-shaped but small head, sunken cheeks, an aquiline nose, a large, fair moustache, and bright, piercing eyes. When he lectured he had a panorama

representing The Great Desert, Salt Lake City, The Salt Lake Hotel, The Great Salt Lake, The Rocky Mountains, and so on. He wore evening dress, and as he spoke he never moved a muscle, but maintained the greatest gravity while saying the drollest things, which convulsed his audience with laughter. He was almost in the last stage of consumption, and so painfully thin that he was but a walking skeleton. His lecture was as curious as his manner; it was composed of telling sentences, each ending with a trap, into which the audience fell quite naturally, and then extricated itself with a hearty laugh; while the lecturer looked mildly astonished, or affected an expression of indignation because his remarks were made the subject of mirth. He acted this so well that there was no appearance of acting, and in this lay his art and his charm. He was a very good man, and every one who had any dealings with him seems to have loved him. He had great determination and pluck, and struggled against his mortal illness; indeed, he lectured when he should have been in bed, and my mother, who saw him towards the close of his entertainments and his life, said that he looked dying as he lectured.

His entertainment was given in the Egyptian Hall, Piccadilly, which he had hired of Arthur Sketchley, another well-known entertainer. As he was not certain of his physical powers of endurance, nor of

how far his entertainment would be appreciated by the English, "Artemus," says Mr. Hingston, "refrained from making alterations in the exhibition room, and, to quote his own joke on the humorous programme he distributed: "During the vacation the Hall has been carefully swept out, and a new door knob has been added to the door." This is a specimen of his humour, and here is another.

At the commencement of one of his lectures he walked on to the platform, and, turning up his eyes and gazing round the Hall, he looked down at the audience, as if he were about to take them into his confidence, and remarked in a slow, solemn, mildly complaining tone, "I wish the Egyptians who built this Hall had known a little more about ventilation." This was so unexpected that after a moment the whole room roared with laughter, and then there were loud bursts of applause.

His entertainments ran only seventeen weeks, and then the lecture-hall closed, never to reopen for him again. He died at Southampton, having proceeded this little way on his road home to Waterford in Maine, where he had left a mother to mourn the loss of a good son. Mr. Hingston, in his *Genial Showman*, gives a short sketch of his life, which was not a long one, for he was quite young when he died. The author says "many attempts have been made to imitate the manner and style of Artemus Ward, but none has succeeded in a faithful reproduction."

We also knew Arthur Sketchley (the Rev. Arthur Rose). I was a school-girl when I first heard him in his inimitable *Mrs. Brown at the Play*. My mother took Miss Wharton Simpson and myself, and we had seats almost in front of the lecturer. Miss Simpson (Mrs. William Black) and I laughed so inordinately that we had pains in our sides, and could not sit upright. The entertainer was so amused at watching our appreciation of his humour that, unconsciously, he kept edging his chair nearer and nearer to the edge of the platform, till at last one leg went over, and he almost pitched head-first into the laps of the audience! At this there were renewed bursts of laughter from the two girls at the end of the second row of seats, and Sketchley, regaining his balance by a miracle, roared with laughter, so that the whole room was convulsed.

But to return to Bexley Heath. When we finally settled there, all these entertainments were practically over; however, I used to come up to town in the season, and then my father's friends, Messrs. Irving, Creswick, Thorne, Toole, etc., would send me seats (generally boxes) for the theatre. In this way I remember seeing Sarah Bernhardt act; I believe it was when she first came over, but of that I am not sure. What I remember most clearly was speaking to her at her exhibition in Piccadilly.

My father had an invitation, but did not care to go, so I went with Mrs. S——, a friend of my

mother's, with whom I often used to stay. Mrs. S—— was so full of enthusiasm and delight at the idea of going to this exhibition that I wondered what she expected. I did not wish to damp her pleasure, but I could not help remarking that “of course we could not expect to see anything so good, either in pictures or sculpture, as we should at the Royal Academy,” and then I found out that it was Sarah Bernhardt herself, and the people she had invited, who were the attraction.

We went; we arrived very early, as Mrs. S—— thought there would be a crush. There were only a very few people there when we made the tour of the gallery; and certainly the pictures, and especially the sculpture, were wonderful for an amateur, and moreover for a busy woman whose life-work was acting. As we walked round, having the gallery practically to ourselves, the great Sarah came in, and after some talk with the attendants began herself to walk round. Then said Mrs. S—— to me, “Now go and speak to her before the room gets crowded.” I hung back, but after a little persuading I went up to her and we shook hands, and we discussed a little picture close by where we were standing. All I can remember about that picture is that it was very green—too green, I thought it, and the actress agreed with me, and told me where and how it was painted. Mrs. S—— then joined in the conversation, and we passed on to the sculptured groups, and Sarah Bernhardt pointed

out a group which I think must have been "After the Storm." I know Mrs. S—— and I liked it very much.

The room began to fill and soon we were hemmed into a corner. All the celebrities of London seemed to be there, and still the people came. The great actress did nothing but shake hands and bow, evidently enjoying it very much ; and I stood near her and enjoyed it too. It was there that I saw Gladstone for the second time. The first time was at one of the Literary Fund Dinners, at which were also the King of the Belgians, the Duke of Connaught, Cardinal Manning, and many other celebrities. Gladstone made a most eloquent speech at the dinner, and I then fully understood how he charmed people.

The last time I saw "the Grand Old Man," as he was called, was many years after ; it was at the wedding of Sir Edward Malet with Lady Ermytrude Russell, daughter of the Duke of Bedford, in Westminster Abbey. I am not fond of weddings, and never go to them ; but as I knew the bridegroom's brother, and he offered my husband and me tickets, I could not well refuse.

I shall never forget the crush there was. We had to leave the carriage and make our way on foot down by the side of the Abbey towards the cloisters. There the crowd was even greater, and, as the tickets were different colours, some policemen kept calling out :

“Show your tickets! show your tickets! Blue tickets this way! blue tickets this way!”

Ours were blue tickets, and I held mine high in the air; I had a lady friend with me, for my husband could not go. We struggled along through the crowd, fearing for our dresses, and were almost forced through a gate into the cloisters, where we found the wedding guests, who were packed like sardines, or herrings in a barrel; we could scarcely breathe, and when the last bridesmaid was thrust in and the gate clanged to upon her, I whispered to my friend:

“We might be prisoners in a cell—unhappy wretches awaiting the sentence of death, instead of the youth, beauty, and flower of the English aristocracy going to a wedding.”

“What will our dresses look like?” whispered my friend.

“Thank goodness our chiffons are not chiffons, but something more substantial!” I retorted; and then Sir Henry Malet (brother of the bridegroom) looked at me, and we exchanged smiles; it was impossible to shake hands, or even bow—we were packed too tightly.

“Reminds one of the black hole in Calcutta,” said a soldierly man in a loud whisper. Beads of perspiration stood on his face, but he could not lift a hand to get at his handkerchief. Just as we were all declaring the heat was unbearable a door opened

at the side of the cloisters, and we were bid to "come this way. Bridesmaids first." Not all the bridesmaids were there, but those who were, after much struggling, went first. I was alarmed for their dresses as I saw them huddling them up to cross a narrow, dirty yard. The wedding guests followed in a troop, and we went up a long flight of stone steps, then through a doorway and up some very dirty stairs, across a very dusty room which looked like a vestry, down more stairs, and at last found ourselves in the Abbey, our seats waiting for us.

"Well," I said, when I was seated, "if this is not a back-stairs way of getting in I should like to know what is."

But we all congratulated ourselves that we had "arrived safely and avoided the crush. It must be dreadful at the main entrance," we said, and by all accounts it was.

I think everybody that was anybody was at that wedding. It was one unbroken line of notable people, and any one can see from the papers of the time who was there. What I was struck with was their want of dignity, their bad behaviour. As soon as the bride and bridegroom had passed down to the vestry, every one rushed to get out—some to see the bride again, to see her enter her carriage, some to go home, or to the reception, or to some other entertainment. But without an exception there was a rush for the doors, and, do what we would, we could not help

ourselves, and so we found ourselves carried on with the crowd, and finally I and my friend were jammed in the doorway, unable to move. The bride had gone, but carriage after carriage came up, the horses prancing and tossing their heads, and one felt afraid of being pushed under their feet. I remember seeing one poor little bridesmaid flattening herself against the wall, her face terror-stricken. I put out my hand to drag her back, and should have been forced violently against her, had not my friend seized my arm and pulled me back ; at the same time I heard a voice saying :

“It’s four o’clock ! it’s four o’clock ! We shall be late for the House, Harcourt ; we *must* get out.”

The speaker was just at the back of me and pushing dreadfully ; but I, grasping my friend’s arm, stood back ; then I turned my head and saw Gladstone and Sir William Harcourt.

The Grand Old Man was looking very eager and hurried, and almost panting for breath. I was very angry, and therefore felt cool and courageous.

“What do you mean by this ungentlemanly behaviour ?” I asked indignantly.

“We are late for the House, madam,” returned the Grand Old Man.

“And is that any reason why we should be killed by those horses ? If you were men you would keep the crowd back.”

“She’s right there,” whispered Harcourt ; “we

must keep the crowd back. I beg your pardon, madam."

Gladstone looked very cross, but did as he was requested, and muttered something which I took for an apology. They kept back the crowd; the bridesmaid got into her carriage, and before ours came up we passed out, Sir William Harcourt and Gladstone bowing as they donned their hats and hurried away.

CHAPTER XXVIII

OLD LETTERS—LADY LYTTON'S CORRESPONDENCE WITH MY FATHER—
SOME ANECDOTES OF BENJAMIN DISRAELI—DISRAELI'S DEVOTION
TO HIS WIFE—LADY BEACONSFIELD—MR. H. D. TRAILL ON REMINIS-
CENCES—THE END.

MOST literary people have a large circle of friends and acquaintances with whom they correspond, and my father, who was fond of letter writing, was no exception to the rule—indeed, I think in those days, when life was not so strenuous as it is now, people took more pains with their correspondence ; and though they did not write such long letters as in the days of Horace Walpole, yet their correspondence was very different from that which we indulge (?) in now ; their letters were chatty, entertaining, amusing, human documents—not so stilted as those of the generation before, and quite as interesting.

My father was a very good letter writer ; but unfortunately I have few of his letters, and when I was about to write his Life, and advertised in *The Athenæum*, I was disappointed at the few that were sent me ; so many people had, they said, destroyed the whole of their correspondence, deeming it either

unsafe, useless, or saddening to keep old letters. There is perhaps something melancholy in reading the correspondence of those who have long passed away ; and yet how much we should have lost, and how little we should know, of the private histories of people if it were not for old letters. If we long

. . . for the touch of a vanished hand,
And the sound of a voice that is still,

as we all must, and do at times, I think we can almost feel the hand and hear the voice when we read old letters.

One of my father's most voluminous correspondents was Lady Lytton, the wife of Bulwer Lytton, the novelist. She would write as often as once a week, or oftener if there was anything in my father's answers that called forth her indignation or admiration. I have most of her letters by me, and had I his they would make most entertaining reading.

From the trend of Lady Lytton's letters, she and my father appear to have talked over most of the notable people and popular books of the time, and to have attacked each other's prejudices and opinions in no sparing manner. Certainly she attacked many of his opinions, and occasionally there seems to have been a battle in which her zeal outran her discretion, for in no measured language Lady Lytton runs down literary people, governments, politicians, and institutions,

and sometimes rails at my father for his "fondness for the powers that be."

As every one knows, Lady Lytton had been a beauty in her day, and she was when we knew her a handsome well-preserved old lady, with a charming manner, a pleasant smile, and a wonderful gift of repartee. But her misfortunes (I might use a stronger word, and say her husband's ill-usage) had made her bitter; therefore her wit was decidedly caustic, if apt.

She lived in a pretty little house in Upper Sydenham which she called her "prison," or "Tartarus," often dating her letters from "Tartarus," and generally signing herself "Rosina Lytton (alas! !)." Here she was surrounded by old Italian pictures, books, bronzes, and really beautiful wood-carving—in fact, what, as she said, Mrs. Hudson (the wife of the "Railway King"), copying Mrs. Malaprop, called her "bigotry and virtue." But in spite of all these beautiful things she was very poor, having, she says in one of her letters, "but £200 a year."

"I do not see," she continues, "why that Blue Book in breeches, the present Lord Derby, should not be appealed to, to get a clause inserted in the poor law amendment for the relief of pauper peeresses, seeing that it was *his* father, the late Lord Derby, who was the inventor of that supererogatory grievance, the Pauper Peeress—so you see you are not the only one looking forward to sitting under the shadow of your own workhouse. I have always thought

Andrew Marvel a very over-rated man ; cold mutton—no, nor even cold shoulders either have any terrors for me ; so here I am and my poverty, continuing our living experience of inter-mural burial, and I must say never was sepulchre sweeter, or fresher, or cleaner, and not the least whited. I have none of the vulgarising, depressing—aye, and deteriorising too—surroundings of poverty ; though I have all the pinching realities in cold, now that coal and all else is so dear.”

The letter I have just quoted is dated 1873. She first wrote to my father in 1870, and continued to do so till his death. She was a great admirer of his writings, and had for many years taken in a weekly journal simply to read his essays and the answers to correspondents which he wrote.

“I read and heed you every week,” she writes ; “all I can say is that if you are not a good man you ought to be hanged ; pardon the *if*, but it is a way they have among authors’ wives—knowing what they know, poor wretches—to receive everything fair, virtuous, lovely, and of good repute, that they meet in print, *cum grano salis* as to its being *identical* with the *writer*. However, as it has been truly said that the best way of doing good is to *be* good ; and as you *do* good, *argal* you must certainly *be* good. Now you may chop this truly feminine logic into any amount of mincemeat you like.”

My father was a great admirer of Disraeli, and

liked him personally very much. Lady Lytton, who knew him well as a young man, disliked him greatly, and was never tired of abusing him, giving him sly digs, or of telling some amusing but ridiculous story about him. Here I will quote one of the most harmless.

“Times are changed with Dizzy since his *début*, when I could not get any one (except old Lady Cork—who was celebrated for her human menageries—and old Lord Hertford, who let me bring whom I pleased) to let me bring him to any salon in London, from his grotesque appearance and ridiculous dress, for he had got himself up as an astounding facsimile of his own young duke—green velvet incomprehensibles, white blonde ruffles, and black silk stockings with *broad scarlet* ribs! When he sent me his *Young Duke* to read in MS. I told him he could not dress him in that way. ‘What!’ said he, in the only paroxysm of innocent good faith he ever had in his life, ‘don’t young dukes dress in that way?’—‘None that I have ever seen.’—I asked D’Orsay one day what he’d take to dress like Dizzy? ‘Leave of my senses!’ was his reply.”

One can scarcely believe that Disraeli could have dressed himself as Lady Lytton describes; yet if he did it was but an error of taste, due perhaps to his Oriental origin. Even that origin Lady Lytton uses as a weapon against him.

“As I know you are a great deferrer to and admirer

of the powers that be, I congratulate you upon Dizzy's descent into the peerage. Having the power, I think he was quite right to confer an earldom on himself—I confess I should like to see him in his peer's robes; he would look such a gorgeous facsimile, all black, scarlet, and yellow, of 'the Black Princely Devil' in a book of Chinese superstitions that Captain Marryat once lent me; but above all I should like to see his glance of ineffable scorn at his mushroom fellow peers, for, as I said in a skit I wrote on him years ago :

“Upstart each name that Doomsday Book discloses,
Compared to *his*! old as the book of Moses.”

It has been remarked by a writer in *The Gentleman's Magazine*, that “all the biographies of Lord Beaconsfield pass lightly over his home life and domestic relationship; and yet these phases of his career disclose, perhaps, the finest traits in his character.” He and the great Liberal leader, Gladstone, had two advantages in common—they both had wives who subordinated every personal consideration, every private ambition, to the public careers of their husbands; and they were alike in being both good husbands. This served as a bond of sympathy between them.

“There are three things,” said Gladstone to Canon MacColl, “for which I shall always admire Disraeli—his devotion to his wife, his defence of his race, and his splendid parliamentary pluck.”

What better character can a man have given him than this ?

Before Disraeli was a statesman he was an author. *Vivian Grey* was the first book that brought him fame ; and it was doubtless then that he became a frequent guest in the house of Mr. Wyndham Lewis, who was a man of wealth, owning some property in Glamorganshire and a fine house in Grosvenor Gate. He and Disraeli became colleagues in Parliament for the borough of Maidstone, and after Mr. Lewis's death, as every one knows, Disraeli married the widow.

It has been said that this marriage was a "marriage of convenience." Disraeli himself used to laugh and tell his wife that he married her for her money ; but this was mere chaff. His attention and devotion to her have been called gratitude ; but if so, they bore a greater likeness to love than much that is called by that name. I think that they were a model couple, and that they mutually loved each other. Certainly from the following anecdote, told to my mother by Lady Lytton, it would seem to have been a love match on the part of the Viscountess Beaconsfield.

"My mother," said Lady Lytton, "went to call upon Mrs. Wyndham Lewis, to condole with her upon the death of her husband. She had no sooner entered the room than the widow came forward, all smiles and eagerness. 'Congratulate me, my dear !' she said, 'Disraeli has proposed !'"

I have heard admirers of Disraeli call him a handsome man; others have declared he was ugly; I myself should call him neither one nor the other, but I think he had a most interesting face, and this reminds me of an anecdote I have told in my father's Life, but which will bear repetition, as it shows Lady Beaconsfield's opinion.

My father was one day dining at —, and at the close of the evening he took the Viscountess Beaconsfield down to her carriage. As he did so he remarked to her :

“ Mr. Disraeli spoke most eloquently to-night; and how well he is looking ! ”

The Viscountess looked up into my father's face with a very pleased expression.

“ Ah ! ” she said, “ you think he looks well—*you* think him handsome, yet people call him ugly; but he is not, he *is handsome*; they should see him asleep.”

Lady Lytton also told the following story, which I have since seen in print. The Viscountess Beaconsfield was fond of going down to the House of Commons with her husband, though she would never go in and listen to the debates, as she had made a vow that she would never attend a debate until Mr. Disraeli had taken his seat as Prime Minister. One day, when they had driven down to the House, as he stepped out and shut the carriage door she put out her hand and accidentally her fingers were caught

in the door ; she turned deadly pale but never uttered a cry, for she knew he was about to take part in an important debate, and feared the knowledge of the accident would upset him. When he was out of sight she called to the servant, who opened the carriage door and released her fingers. The footman would have rushed after his master, but she would not allow it, so they drove as fast as they could to a doctor's, who attended to her hand. Disraeli was himself fond of telling this story, being proud of his wife's devotion and grateful to her for all she had done for him.

Even Lady Lytton, at whose house they first met, cannot refrain from giving Disraeli praise for his devotion to his wife ; and certainly in this respect he and Gladstone have set an example to their fellow men that it would be to every one's advantage if more of them would follow.

“Poor Lady Beaconsfield !” writes Lady Lytton ; “I never thought I should feel her death so much, but now I only remember how kind she was to me as a girl, and long after, till she married Dizzy, when those twin harpies, the World and Ambition—in the shape of his political thimblérig pal my Lord Lytton—‘intervening,’ she was told to *faire volte face*. Poor soul, God be merciful to her ! she was as severely and cruelly tried by wealth, happiness, pleasure, gratified vanity, success, and a ceaseless and insolent prosperity, as I have been by the most brutal

persecution, blackest ingratitude, bitter injustice, and ceaseless misfortune. Though Dizzy only married her for her money, I'll do him the full justice to believe that, after having for a time reaped the benefit of it, had she, by one of those cruel treacheries of fate so rife in this world, lost all her possessions, he has sufficient of the Damascus blade of Chivalry of a true gentleman to have continued equally kind and *prévenant* to her, and I am sure *now* he sincerely mourns her."

Here, with the death of the Viscountess Beaconsfield, I will close my book, or I may, like Tennyson's brook, go on for ever ; for when one begins to write reminiscences, there seems to be no end, and I have no wish to tire my readers out. I will therefore add only one more interview, which shows how *In the Sixties and Seventies* came to be written.

When I published the Memoir of my father, I had occasion to write to Mr. Traill, editor of *Literature*, to correct a careless mistake his reviewer had made in reviewing the book. Mr. Traill inserted my letter, wrote privately and apologised, and asked me to call and see him any time I was passing *The Times* office. So one day I called, and was shown into a vast, gloomy room. In a few moments Mr. Traill entered, shook me cordially by the hand, and said : "What an interesting, well-written book yours is ! I wish I had read it sooner, I would have reviewed it myself."

I told him I was extremely sorry he had not done so.

Then we settled down to talk of the people we had mutually known, and I told him many of the stories in this book. He seemed especially interested in Irving, and much amused at my account of the first night of *The Bells*; he also said that my description of Irving, sitting listening to Mendelssohn's "Songs without Words," was lifelike.

"You should write your own reminiscences, and mind and put all the anecdotes in from the Memoir," he said; and when I objected, he replied: "Why not? anecdotes are what the Public like; you have interested me, why not others? You say you are writing for your living—well, write your reminiscences; the book will go."

"But reminiscences are so egotistical; the critics will say I am vain, and I know not what else."

"Let them; what does it matter if the book pleases the Public? An author must have a good pachydermatous skin; don't you know that?"

"Is it fair," I asked, "to write about these people, who have been kind, and petted me as a child? I like them all, but I could not perhaps, with truth, show them all in a pleasant light; and I should hate to think that any words of mine had hurt or belittled them."

"I don't think you will do that if you write the

truth, and your own impressions ; and one's youthful impressions one remembers best. The Memoir, I tell you, is well written ; the anecdotes are excellent—there might have been more."

"The publisher wanted more ; but I was writing my father's life, not anecdotes of other people, in which I came in too much ; so I cut the Dickens anecdote short, and only put in half the Tennyson—it was too complimentary."

Mr. Traill laughed. "Write another book and put the whole in, compliments and all, and I'll review it."

"I think I'll wait till some more of the well-known people are dead," I said, as I shook hands with him at the top of the stairs.

"Don't," said Mr. Traill ; "I want to review it."

I came away, meaning to take his advice. But I delayed—delayed too long, for when the book was half written I heard of Mr. Traill's death. One more literary friend, who had known my father, was gone. I was very sorry, and I locked up my MS. for several years ; yet I always felt I should finish it, for Mr. Traill said it would please the Public, and what author does not want to please the Public ? besides, I felt the great compliment Mr. Traill had paid me, for I knew his judgment in literary matters was considered infallible.

I would only add that I have tried to keep from

intruding too much upon my readers, but I fear I have not altogether succeeded; therefore I would remind them, and my critics, that all reminiscences are bound to be leaves from the lives of the writers, and, however much one may wish to avoid egoism, it is not possible in a book of this kind.

THE END

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